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New Masses

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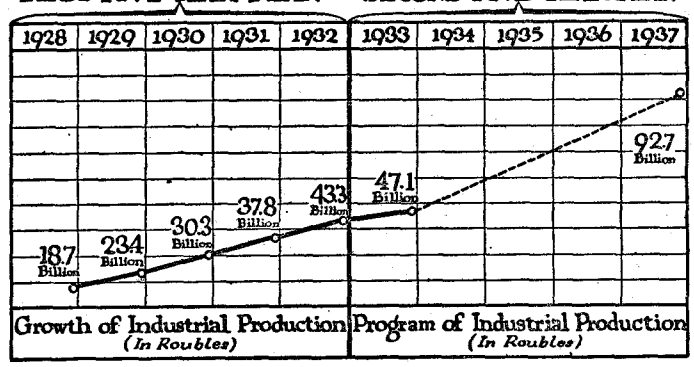

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New Masses

JUNE 5, 1934

WHEN the Wagner Bill was first introduced, its sponsor announced that the purpose was to curb the company union and aid bona fide labor organization. The bill has now reached its final stages, and stands revealed as a government charter for—the company union. It sets up a permanent National Industrial Adjustment Board whose findings have the force of law. It declares it has no initiative power to arbitrate between capital and labor—that it must be invited by both sides to do so. It cannot "arbitrate" unless both employers and employes agree—that's Wagner's story. But, upon examination we discover the following joker; under the "unfair labor practices" section, the Secretary of Labor can designate what he considers an "unfair labor practice." Then the board has jurisdiction and can step into a strike to smash the workers' rights. Significant also is the fact that this bill is rushed, by the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, at the height of strike struggles in Minneapolis, Toledo, and the Pacific Coast. It supplies government endorsement of the company union and government support of the open shop.

Four points are summarized in the committee's report on the bill, which now has the blessing of President Roosevelt and General Johnson:

1. Employers are to be restrained from interfering with the rights of workers to organize. (How, is not stated.)
2. Employes are to be prohibited from interfering with the "cooperative effort of employers to present a united front."
3. Employers are not to "dominate" company unions, but they would not be forbidden "to indulge in the normal relations and innocent communications which are part of all friendly relations between employer and employe."
4. The closed or union shop is banned. The employer is not required to maintain a closed shop. In effect, this gives him government sanction for the open shop, the company union, the yellow dog contract.

This is the bill the A. F. of L. leadership urges its workers to support. This is the bill Norman Thomas endorses in his editorials in the official Socialist weekly. This is the bill the Communist Party has been fighting from the beginning and is fighting now.

Jacob Burck

IT is particularly significant that Indiana, home state of the Ku Klux Klan and American Legion, should produce the first organization to endorse the Farmers Emergency Relief Bill. Indiana farmers by no means responded according to the wishes of the local terrorists who in February clapped Jesse Hann and Alfred Tiala in jail for leading 1,000 farmers against a foreclosure sale. On the contrary, a farmers' mass pressure compelled the recent release of Hann. The present endorsement by the local at Leesburg, Ind., is but the first response to an intensive campaign now being developed by the United Farmers League in preparation for its first national convention in Minneapolis, June 22. Thousands of leaflets of the Bill are now being distributed by the Farmers Weekly in an effort to bring this measure to the eyes of farmers throughout the nation.

IN terse, unmistakable language the Farmers Emergency Relief Bill provides the concrete means for ameliorating the conditions now thwarting farmers all over the country. Demanding immediate repeal of the Agricultural Adjustment Act—which has resulted in evictions of tens of thousands of share-croppers, tenant farmers and farm owners; in unfair taxation; wastage in farm production; and a hideous thriving of monopolies—the Bill offers six constructive provisions. It provides (1) for immunity against evictions, loss of equipment and seizure of chattels because of inability to pay; (2) cash relief to farmers in need; (3) cash loans for crop production; (4) reparations for losses

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suffered since 1921 through evictions, seizure, attachments, etc.; (5) against discrimination of any kind in the administration of the bill; and (6) the all important control of administration by the rank and file. Two billion dollars necessary for this measure can be raised by taxing inheritances, gifts and all incomes above $5,000 per year. Needless to add, the present Bill is the only proposed legislation which farmers can depend on to save them from continued ruin.

ERNEST THAELMANN, staunch leader of the Communist Party of Germany, is held incommunicado in a Nazi prison. He is being flogged and tortured. His Nazi jailers are vainly trying to break the spirit of this splendid proletarian fighter, this transport worker who of the forty-eight years of his life has spent thirty-two in the revolutionary labor struggle. The Nazis are preparing to make Thaelmann pay for their ignominy in the Reichstag Trial. The Thaelmann trial, announces the Berlin Volkszeitung, "will be the first big trial conducted by the newly established 'People's Court.'" That means that Thaelmann will be deprived of the most elementary rights as a defendant: The "Court" is empowered to start the trial without notice and to rush the death sentence through before world opinion can be mobilized in his defense. The failure of Hitler's policies at home and abroad and the consequent disaffection of the German masses as manifested in the recent elections of the Nazi-sponsored factory "councils" are driving the Hitlerites to desperation. Fears of collapse generate hysteria. In such an atmosphere Thaelmann seems to be doomed. The only thing that can save him is a protest so loud, so widespread, so mighty that even the Nazis won't dare to defy it. THE NEW MASSES urges its readers to form delegations to German Consulates, to send individual and group telegrams to the German Embassy in Washington and the Nazi Minister of Justice in Berlin, to organize great mass demonstrations, demanding Thaelmann's release. Thaelmann must be wrested from the clutches of the Nazi executioners!

THERE is an air of futility and hopelessness about the disarmament conference now meeting in Geneva. Capitalism is being torn by its own antagonisms, and the advance of Fascism, instead of reconciling these

Mackey

"Still I want to get on record my sympathy for the thin line of National Guardsmen."

—HEYWOOD BROUN.

antagonisms, has only succeeded in intensifying them. Imperialist nations can find no way out of their dilemma. The armaments race is assuming catastrophic proportions, and nothing apparently can stop it. Germany is rapidly re-arming. France, out of breath, is endeavoring to retain its military superiority over Germany. The Little Entente, already armed to the teeth, is hastily piling up more armaments. Poland is strengthening its vast military establishment. Italy is concentrating on perfecting the efficiency of its armed forces, and has just announced the building of three new warships. The same applies to Turkey, Japan, England and the United States. "The makers of armaments are becoming more insolent in their prosperity; big navy men and other professional nationalists more shameless in advocating the expansion of their countries' armaments." There seems to be no way of averting another holocaust. The only hope is in the masses who are beginning to realize the absurdity of expecting professional warmongers to prevent war, who are beginning to realize that the only effective power to stop war lies with them—the workers and the farmers of the world, they who make the munitions, grow the food, supply the cannon fodder, and in time of war are themselves in possession of arms.

THE New York State Department of Health reports that the death rate, as well as the birth rate, for the first quarter of 1934 was the lowest "for all time." The death rate was 12.6 per thousand of population. Undoubtedly these figures will make many well-fed people feel smugly satisfied. On their face, the figures prove that the depression and mass unemployment and bread-lines have improved health, disregarding for the moment the significant fall in the birth-rate. There is no evidence on which doubt can be cast over the figures and therefore we accept them, provisionally, as correct. Assuming that there has been an actual decline in mortality despite the ravages of the depression, nothing is thereby proven. No break-down of the statistics is given, showing from what causes death resulted in this quarter compared with previous quarters when different economic conditions prevailed. The figures do not show, what is probably true, that more early deaths are now taking place in the working class than in the upper class which, during the boom years, probably contributed greater numbers of deaths to the figures by reason of reckless living on bloated incomes. There has been a marked decline of whoopee making among the high-income groups, it is generally conceded, and there are probably fewer premature deaths from such causes. The gains in health in the upper social strata are probably approximately balanced by the increased deaths in the lower-income and no-income groups, for it would be simply absurd to suppose that mass unemployment and mass misery were improving the health of the community.

A PARTIAL break-down of the figures was given with respect to cancer and heart-disease, the latter known to be greatly stimulated by the speed-up in industry. The death rate from cancer was 1.32 for each 1,000 of population or more than 10 percent of all deaths and the death rate from heart disease was 3.58 per 1,000 of population or more than 25 percent of all deaths. The high death rate from heart diseases is only natural in a society that strains its working population to the maximum in order to turn out profits and creates conditions where the maximum use of stimulants such as tobacco, coffee, tea and alcohol are virtually necessary and are encouraged by wild-eyed advertising to the nth degree. Although giving the death rate from automotive accidents (1.65 per 1,000 of population) the statistics do not give figures on industrial accidents, which should now be much lower than in

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previous years because of the decline in manufacturing. In other words, not so many workers are crowded around improperly protected machinery because they are out on the bread-lines and naturally not so many are killed at their work. Many more points could be made about the statistics, but the few made here are sufficient to indicate that the statistics may mean a great deal less than nothing.

LAST year, after the success of the first Five Year Plan, the tremendous harvest, the improvement in Soviet living conditions, friends of the Soviet Union wondered what the hostile critics could say now. Today we are compelled to appreciate their versatility and subtleties of logic. Their technic is suggestive of Lucretius' lover, for whom:

> The mute girl's "modest"; and the garrulous,
> The spiteful spit-fire, is "a sparkling wit";
> And she who scarcely lives for scrawniness
> Becomes "a slender darling"; "delicate"
> Is she who's nearly dead of coughing-fit.

These critics' fertility is as inexhaustible as their poorly concealed venom. Does the U.S.S.R. advocate complete and total disarmament? Then it is merely seeking its own interests. Does it forge a mighty Red Army to defend its borders? Then it is becoming just another imperialist nation. Is there a food shortage? Then millions are dying from starvation. But has it had a successful harvest? Then peasants and workers kill themselves by over-eating. Have they sought to institute collectivized school work? Then they are regimenting the youth and destroying all individualism. Do they correct certain abuses in their educational institutions? Then the New York Times explains: "Russia's Students Now Individualists." Do they directly aid the world revolutionary movement? Then they must be isolated and suppressed. Do they not send armies out to defend Communist parties in other lands? Clearly, then, they are betrayers of their revolutionary trust, false followers of Marx and Lenin. And in recent weeks three new ones have appeared. Are Soviet women plainly dressed? Then let that be a lesson on socialism for all women. Do they seek to produce and distribute brighter and better women's clothes? Then, as a Times' headline asserts, "Even in Communism, Women Are Women." Is there a shortage of furniture, gadgets, kitchen utensils? Only Capitalism can provide man with these articles of civilization. But are they producing these articles in abundance today? Then the country "is threatened by the plague of . . . . Grand Rapids furniture, bric-à-brac and general bad taste. . . ." Have they no jazz, cabarets, and the like? Then how drab is the barracks life of a socialist society! But do they institute cafés and play jazz? Surely they are becoming plain bourgeois, no different from people everywhere else. Obviously, there is no logical answer to these "arguments"; no answer at all.

UNDER the provisions of an old slave-code amended in 1866, the state supreme court of Georgia has virtually illegalized the Communist Party. Finding the young Negro organizer, Angelo Herndon, guilty of "inciting to insurrection" for leading an unemployed delegation in Atlanta two years ago, the court last week upheld the original sentence of 18 to 20 years on the chain gang. And the Rev. J. A. Hudson, the assistant solicitor-general, announces that this ruling will be made the basis for demanding the death penalty for Communist and other militant workers in Georgia. He will immediately demand the trial of the "Atlanta Six" now out on bail—two Negro men, two white women, and two white men indicted in 1930 for "inciting to insurrection" because they possessed a pamphlet showing a black and white worker shaking hands. The International Labor Defense has announced that it will immediately appeal to the United States Supreme Court. At the same time it made public the fact that it has forced the court to order a physical re-examination of Herndon, who is suffering acute stomach trouble as a result of the bad prison food.

ATTORNEYS for the I.L.D., Leibowitz, Fraenkel, and Chamlee, in a hearing on appeal at Montgomery, Ala. on May 25 demanded the reversal of death sentences against the first two Scottsboro boys, Patterson and Norris. On the supreme court bench sits Judge Thomas E. Knight, the father of the attorney-general who obtained the death sentences in Decatur last December, and who now proposes to throw out the entire appeal by means of a preposterous legal technicality. The supreme court will conduct a closed hearing after which one of the judges will write an opinion to be handed down within two months. The court, of course, is acutely

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conscious that the working class and its white collar and student allies are demonstrating in cities all over the world against the brutal frame-up and death verdict. In order to close its ears to a thunder of indignation, the court now threatens action against the telegraph companies if they continue to deliver wires of protest. The companies have submitted to this unconstitutional order, but sympathizers the world over can overwhelm the court with letters of protest addressed to Montgomery, Ala.

THE struggles of Negro and white miners for a living wage in the Alabama coal fields, the growth of the radicalization of the Negro longshoremen in southern ports, the rise of the sharecroppers' union, the tremendous effect of the Scottsboro case throughout the United States, are keeping constantly before us, indeed bringing out ever more sharply, the Negro national liberation movement and the revolutionary potentialities of the Negro people. No one can see the new play *Stevedore* without excitement and exultation at the fighting spirit of the Negroes manifested there, the union of the black and white longshoremen in the final battle in defense of the Negro homes. It is not irrelevant, then, to resurrect the words of Wendell Phillips, spoken at a meeting in Boston in February, 1861. "Strictly speaking," Phillips said, "I repudiate the term *'Insurrection.'* The slaves are not a herd of vassals. They are a nation, four millions strong; having the same right of *revolution* that Hungary and Florence have." This is a startling forecast of the Communist position on the Negro question today. The Communists contend that the Negroes are a nation of twelve millions having the same right of self-determination as has any oppressed national minority. Their struggle can be successful only through the closest unity of the oppressed Negro and white proletariat of America.

"HE kisses the rod like a good Catholic, a good Communist or a good Nazi." This is the comment of the Nation upon the revolting statement of the Nazi agent, Viereck, accepting the suppression in Germany of one of his books. Note the coupling of Communist with Catholic and Nazi. It is another instance of the consistent campaign of insinuation to discredit Communism, the only real enemy of Fascism. The Nation "liberals" serve among unorganized intellectual workers the same function that the A.F. of L. serves in organized American labor. The Nation has supported the N.R.A. in its program of saving capitalism by passing on the cost of the crisis to the working class. In the field of culture, by an "anti-propaganda" and "pure literature" attitude it has been a consistent enemy of revolutionary literature. It is "impartial" in the sense that it doesn't much care how the putrid corpse of capitalism which lies athwart the world is perfumed and tidied up, so long as the cadaver is preserved. It is "impartial" in the sense that it doesn't care who attacks Communism in its pages, so long as it is attacked. This is the historic role of the liberal, and it might seem to carry its own guaranty of success. And yet we believe that the influence of the Nation is dwindling; that honest intellectuals are turning from it in anger.

The Week's Papers

WEDNESDAY—The House decides to do something for the little man. It passes bill authorizing $440,000,000 for direct loans to industry. Small concerns under act "may borrow up to the amount of their surplus on July 1, 1934." . . . Three thousand New York bakers return Blue Eagles to Gen. Johnson. They inform him the N.R.A. has bankrupted many small bakers. . . . United States announces if Japan continues building up its Navy, the U. S. will consider extending its naval bases in the Pacific. . . . William Dudley Pelley indicted by grand jury in Asheville, N. C. The Silver Shirtite is accused of selling worthless stock of some of his publications. . . . Darrow meets Johnson.

Thursday—Two killed, many hurt as National Guard troops attack picket lines of Electric Auto Lite plant in Toledo. . . . Court rules Henry Ford "thwarts the N.R.A." so Government needn't award him car contracts even when his bids are lowest. . . . Representative Cannon calls United States ambassadors "merely errand boys, and not very bright ones" and asks that they all be fired. . . . Georgia Supreme Court upholds 18-20 year sentence imposed on Angelo Herndon.

Friday—Cunard and White Star lines combine. Many clerks, stenographers and other workers will lose jobs. . . . Mary Van Kleeck tells Kansas City National Conference on Social Work the N.R.A. has reduced workers' standards of living. . . . Alabama Supreme Court reserves decision on appeal for two Scottsboro boys, Heywood Patterson and Charles Norris. . . . Estate of Mrs. Elizabeth Mills Reid appraised at $20,463,941. . . . Congress wants to amend Wagner bill so it will be more out and out a strike prohibiting and strike breaking act.

Saturday—Mass demonstration greets release of two strike pickets jailed 90 days for violating an injunction attempting to prevent picketing of the Eisner Uniform plant at Red Bank, N. J. . . . Many injured when police club demonstrators protesting the New York City system of relief. . . . William Randolph Hearst changes his mind—he now supports the N.R.A., but declares himself against the Newspaper Guild because "I always regarded our business as a profession, not a trade union." . . . Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt says she was overpaid when she received $500 a minute for a six minute radio broadcast. But it was for charity, so she is satisfied. . . . Chicago World's Fair reopens, with Roosevelt in radio speech telling the people the nation's troubles are practically over.

Sunday—Rossi and Codos leave Paris on non-stop flight to San Diego. . . . The New York Committee on Use of Leisure Time decides New York provides adequate facilities for "new public leisure." The only trouble is people don't know about them. . . . Roosevelt exempts service industries from some of the fair trade practices under the codes. Some of the industries were kicking. . . . Steel production rapidly falling off, with new low expected in July. . . . United States fleet is on way to New York to be reviewed by President. . . . Rear Admiral C. H. Woodward coins a phrase: "Let's keep our swords sharp and our powder dry."

Monday—Samuel Insull's cash often went to support Representative Oscar De Priest's political campaigns, Washington hearing reveals. "Who filled the

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political jack-pot was never any business of mine," De Priest comments. "I was interested in swinging votes." . . . General strike of 300,000 textile workers threatens if cotton textile industry production is curtailed by N.R.A. order. . . . New York City's May relief expenditures aggregate about $17,000,000. This is two and a half times as much as in November last. . . . At least one-third of New York judges "can be reached" Prof. I. M. Wormser tells Federal Bar Association. . . . Codos and Rossi land in Brooklyn after 38½ hours non-stop flight from Paris. . . . Police attack longshoremen's picket lines in San Francisco, San Diego and New Orleans. . . . Revocation of certain code provisions in service industries spurs price war. All seem to agree the minimum wages and maximum hours provisions of these codes now will be abandoned. . . . Thirty-nine writers and other professionals sign appeal to Roosevelt for Federal investigation of White Legion terrorizing Alabama workers.

Tuesday — United States District Court at Wilmington refuses Government request for petition to restrain Weirton Steel Company from intimidating its workers wanting to form their own union. . . . 2,000,000 square miles in 18 states affected by another drought. . . . Loss of crops, livestocks may reach half a billion dollars. . . . Business failures rose to 225 for week ending May 24. . . . Loophole found for Bolivia and Paraguay to give American munitions makers profits despite embargo. . . . Sales can be made if goods are first sent to a foreign country, ban "to end war" being only against sale in the United States. . . . Members of Loose Milk Commission of New York are in pay of the Milk Trust, former Health Commissioner Louis I. Harris asserts.

Announcing a Prize Novel Contest

THE NEW MASSES in conjunction with The John Day Company, publishers, announce a prize of $750 for the best novel on an American proletarian theme submitted before April 1, 1935.

Unlike the Pulitzer awards, on which we had occasion to comment a fortnight ago, this is a prize that means something. Unlike the Pulitzer committee, we have nothing up our sleeves: far from trying to conceal our class bias, we want to make it perfectly clear. We sponsor this contest because we desire to foster the literature of the American working class.

The growth of proletarian literature in recent years, even in recent months, is remarkable. Conroy's *The Disinherited,* Armstrong's *Parched Earth,* Rollins' *The Shadow Before,* and Cantwell's *Land of Plenty* have appeared in rapid succession. In the theatre we have had *Peace on Earth, They Shall Not Die,* and *Stevedore.* A dozen little magazines testify to the vigor of scores of poets and short story writers, scattered from one end of the country to the other.

The average reader can scarcely realize the sacrifices out of which this literature has grown: editors going without food to pay their printers, novelists writing after long days in shops and offices, poets polishing their verses as they stand in breadlines. The lot of most American writers has never been an easy one, but the proletarian writer struggles against obstacles that would discourage any but the most militant spirit.

We are proud, therefore, to be able to offer some sort of assistance in this struggle. That the contest will stimulate the writing of proletarian novels is certain, and yet that is not the main point; proletarian novelists generally do not need an external stimulus to start them writing. What is important is that we can directly aid one proletarian writer and perhaps aid indirectly many more.

The rules for the contest are simple enough:

1. All manuscripts must be submitted by April 1, 1935.
2. Each manuscript must be signed with a pseudonym; accompanying each manuscript there must be a sealed envelope with the pseudonym on the outside and the author's real name and address inside.
3. All novels submitted must be in the English language, must be typed, and must be not less than 60,000 words.
4. All novels submitted must deal with the American proletariat.
5. All manuscripts entered in the contest are also offered to The John Day Company for publication, terms to be arranged between the author and The John Day Company, and any author under contract to another publisher must obtain a release before entering the contest.
6. The decision of the five judges will be by majority vote. The judges reserve the right to reject all manuscripts.
7. The prize of $750 will be paid to the author of the winning novel upon his signing of a standard Authors' League contract with The John Day Company, which will publish the novel. The prize will be in addition to all royalties.

The judges of the contest are Granville Hicks, literary editor of THE NEW MASSES; William F. Dunne, journalist and former editor of the Daily Worker; Alan Calmer, national secretary of the John Reed Clubs of the United States; Richard J. Walsh, president of The John Day Company; and Critchell Rimington, vice-president and associate editor of The John Day Company.

Those manuscripts that are regarded as definitely unsuitable will be returned as promptly as possible after they are received. Manuscripts held for final consideration will be returned when the results of the contest are announced. Unless directed to do otherwise, THE NEW MASSES will return manuscripts by express collect.

Any novel dealing with any section of the American working class may be submitted in this contest. For the purposes of the contest it is not sufficient that the novel be written from the point of view of the proletariat; it must actually be concerned with the proletariat. The term proletariat, however, is defined in its broadest sense, to include, for example, the poorer farmers, the unemployed, and even the lower fringes of the petty bourgeoisie as well as industrial workers. The characters, moreover, need not all be drawn from the working class so long as the book is primarily concerned with working-class life.

The judges in making their decision will try to consider all relevant factors. They will consider the author's purpose and the extent to which he has realized that purpose. They will ask themselves

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whether characters are representative and whether they are convincing. They will measure the significance of the theme by their understanding of the present situation and temper of the American proletariat, and they will also consider each novel in terms of the author's conception and aim.

It is to be hoped, that the contest will attract workers as well as professional novelists. Though the worker may be handicapped in certain obvious respects, his firsthand knowledge of his theme can give his work an authenticity that the observer rarely achieves, and this is a quality that the judges will value highly when they have to make their final decision.

THE NEW MASSES welcomes The John Day Company's participation in the sponsoring of this contest. Once more we have evidence of the vitality of the proletarian cultural movement. In a world in which decadence and despair seem, so far as the average bourgeois writer is concerned, to be inescapable, the courage and purposefulness of proletarian writing are obvious even to those who do not share the hopes of the proletariat.

Moley Attacks Communism

SOME time ago we found occasion to apply the short and ugly word to Mr. Raymond Moley, editor of the magazine Today. We thought we had proved our point by our analysis of an article which appeared in the magazine he edits for Roosevelt's little playfellow, Vincent Astor. The article gave a picture of the situation of labor under N.R.A. so completely at variance with all known facts that it would have been ludicrous had its purpose to mislead and disarm the workers not been so vicious. We called Mr. Moley a liar (by choice) for printing the article.

Now Mr. Moley has turned his attention to Communism. In an editorial in Today he rubs his hands gleefully over what he sees as the failure of Communism to make headway in the United States, and announces the conclusion that Communism is not a menace. Incidentally he offers a program for the prevention of Communism (which would seem a somewhat superfluous proceeding, since there is nothing to be prevented).

But neither Moley's "analysis" nor his "program" is what interests us at the moment. We called Mr. Moley a liar several months ago and we repeat it now. Read this quotation from Mr. Moley's editorial:

> Apparently the use of violence is declining in favor. THE NEW MASSES declares the futility of "the lone shot and the isolated bomb." The new "tactic" is to refrain from violence until the following prerequisites are present: "First, the dominant class can no longer rule; second, the turbulence of the discontented masses reaches such a pitch that they are ready to descend into the streets to fight; and third, there must be a Communist Party able to guide the elements of revolution into Soviet channels."

"The new 'tactic.'" What is the reader supposed to understand by that? Must he not conclude that there had been recently a change in policy by which the Communist Party abandoned terroristic tactics previously used? And can there be any doubt that Mr. Moley, by quoting from this publication ("THE NEW MASSES declares the futility of the 'lone shot and the isolated bomb'") intends his reader to believe that such a change of policy was announced, or commented on, in THE NEW MASSES? Now read the portion of the editorial paragraph from which Mr. Moley has torn a sentence (issue of May 22). The paragraph dealt with a dynamite scare cry raised in California to serve as an excuse for intensifying the terror against strikers in the Imperial Valley.

> The press, like the police, pretended ignorance of a fundamental tenet of the Communist Party — "No individual violence!" Time and again the Communists have explained their thesis: organization, mass pressure, mass action. Communists declare the futility of the lone shot, the isolated bomb. They have always repudiated terrorist tactics. Communists contend that a successful revolution demands the following prerequisites: first, the dominant class can no longer rule; second, the turbulence of the discontented masses reaches such a pitch that they are ready to descend into the streets to fight; and third, there must be a Communist Party able to guide the elements of revolution into Soviet channels.

There is no "new tactic," either on the part of the Communist Party or Mr. Moley. The Communist Party always has opposed individual violence, and opposes it now. Mr. Moley was proved a liar some months ago. He is demonstrating now that his aversion to telling the truth is no mere constitutional weakness, but a matter of settled policy.

Why does Today, unofficial organ of the White House, appear now with an attack upon Communism? In its breathlessness to rescue capitalism, it loses logic, it violates reason. What curious, contradictory arguments! Superciliously it exorcises the Communist Party out of existence, proclaiming "the utter futility of Communism in America." (Several thousand words to labor this point.) Then Professor Moley clinches his thesis with the ancient American saw—"the essential soundness of the good-humored, self-possessed American system which it (Communism—Ed.) would destroy."

Oh this good humor! What of Toledo, sir? An isolated case? What of Minneapolis? San Francisco? The entire Pacific Coast strike? New Orleans? Birmingham? Within the past few weeks the spurt of gunfire has whipped around the compass—to the West Coast, to the Middle West, to the East. Your New Deal talks straight from the muzzle now, Mr. Professor. And it too proclaims "the essential soundness of the good-humored, self-possessed American system"?

The professor says "Communism in the body politic grows in much the same manner as an infection in the human system. In each case," he says, "there is the germ, and *it is well to attack it directly.*" (Ah, now we are getting at the roots of this. But it does not do for a liberal professor to stump for outright attack upon the Communists.) Therefore, he proposes a few "don'ts" for the prevention of Communism.

He urges the avoidance, not only of injustice but even the "appearance of injustice." He warns against official violence despite the zealousness with which Communists pound their heads against police clubs. "Improve living conditions," he exclaims. "Maintain the process of democracy." . . "Let every

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government official and every government agency learn to make clear to the public what he is doing and why he is doing it."

He avoids one salient point: his proposals are impossible under capitalism. They can be realized only under a classless society. Hence all his proposals are obviated by their impossibility. They sound good and liberal: therefore he proposes them. But he knows, as do all students of political economy, these "dont's" are unrealizable in a society based upon class-struggle.

But there is one proposal the good Professor made which is realizable: not only realizable, it is being practised today. That is his injunction that "it is well to attack it (Communism—Ed.) directly."

And here we have it. The rest is confused palaver, window-dressing, liberal pretension. We can therefore discount the professor's sincerity when he declares "Communism has failed to grow in this country because the organism it is seeking to attack is strong and vigorous." Strong and vigorous—with the country aflame with revolt, workers battling troops, police, bayonets, bullets, gas and clubs! The revolt against the N.R.A. is gaining momentum; Roosevelt has just announced the retreat of the whole N.R.A. program, on a substantial front, the so-called "service" industries. N.R.A. is a failure. With great strike struggles going on, with a national steel strike threatening, Wall Street and Washington — Astor and Moley—need a scapegoat. Washington is okay; Wall Street is okay; capitalism is okay; only the Communists, these damned, feeble, unintelligent, inept revolutionaries cause the Toledos, the Minneapolis', the New Orleans', the Birminghams.

Mr. Hearst has been calling for the suppression of Communism for some time. As for Mr. Moley we think the gentleman doth protest too much. He betrays his real attitude by his involved and tortuous exorcism. Mr. Moley's (and hence Mr. Roosevelt's) organ raises the cry of violence (while providing a convenient disclaimer of any intent to inspire the illegalizing of the Communist movement, by declaring it small and ineffective). Is it not only a step from this position to the official incitement of the American Fascist terror, raids, etc., to drive the Communist Party underground?

But Mr. Moley's editorial itself was only an aside, occasioned by another piece in the same issue of Today, an article "exposing" Communism by McAlister Coleman, who is a Socialist. This is the way Coleman begins his article:

> A woman shrieks, rolls over on the pavement, crying, "He kicked me," and pointing at an amazed young policeman some distance away. Other women, young and old, and a few youths surround the officer. He waves his club. Someone in the crowd hits him. In a moment he's the center of a yelling mass. He blows his whistle for help. Fellow policemen come to his rescue. By now everyone has lost his temper, there are curses, the sound of heads being whacked and then the wail of a police siren on a riot squad car, bringing in its wake a huge crowd.
>
> Presently, all across New York's Union Square, hatless young Communists are fleeing from club-swinging, humanly enraged police; more of the women "shock troops" of the Party are screaming now—fighting with fierce courage. Newspaper photographers and reporters are running from one snarled group to another, often becoming embroiled themselves in the general fighting.

That is a Socialist leader's view (Coleman has been a candidate on the Socialist ticket) of police brutality, when writing for hire in an Administration organ. We have at hand another picture of police brutality. It appeared in the New York Daily News, one of the most bitter enemies of the working class in the entire capitalist press. It describes the behavior of the police outside Tombs Police Court, Sunday, May 27. A dozen or so C.W.A. workers had been clubbed and arrested the previous day. At the hearing, the judge set their bail at $1,500 each, a prohibitively high figure. Other C.W.A. workers in the courtroom booed. The judge ordered the room cleared. The Daily News reporter tells what happened next:

> With smooth precision, thirty policemen who had been hidden in rooms adjoining the courtroom drove the spectators down the stairs and into White St. On the sidewalk, Lechay and his wife failed to move as rapidly as one patrolman thought they should.
>
> With a shove between the shoulders which sent the woman sprawling on her face, the patrolman launched his attack.
>
> "Let us alone," shouted the man. "We're going."
>
> The two stumbled into the street, obviously trying to obey the order to move on. The patrolman, with a comrade at his heels, pursued.
>
> Just as the couple reached the opposite curb, the patrolman struck the woman on the head with his fist, knocking her into the gutter while his comrade pushed her husband on top of her.
>
> Caught between two closely parked cars, the couple, struggling to rise, were the targets for a rain of blows and kicks.
>
> Lechay and his wife managed to regain their feet and started to flee down White St. toward Centre St. They made only a few yards before the infuriated police flung themselves upon the hapless pair.
>
> As the woman lay on the sidewalk, seeking to protect herself from the blows and moaning at each fresh assault, her husband screamed: "My God, she's my wife! Let her alone!"
>
> Knocking down her husband, the cops went to work in real earnest. Kick after kick landed in the ribs of both the man and woman. They dragged Lechay to his knees and threw him down again. The fists of one patrolman beat a tattoo upon the woman's head.
>
> It was then that the reporters, gathered upon the stairs across the street, set up their cry of protest. For answer, the two policemen seized the woman and, twisting her arms behind her back, dragged her back across the street.
>
> Lechay, momentarily free, ran after his wife, still crying: "For God's sake stop it! She's my wife!"
>
> Other policemen seized him and beat him while the two who held his fainting wife slapped her face with their free hands until she collapsed.
>
> Two reporters, at this point, leaped from the steps to report the cruelty to superior officers. The police then seemed to realize they had overstepped all bounds.
>
> The police carried Lechay and his wife to the complaint room and a few minutes later they were arraigned.

Here, then we have two pictures of the police in action against the workers. The Socialist, writing out of knowledge, lies most foully: the capitalist reporter, writing out of ignorance, tells the truth. The one, conversant with the history of class-struggle, twists and fabricates, exposing himself for all to see—a vile, disgusting thing. The capitalist reporter, employe of an anti-labor newspaper, himself perhaps totally indifferent or even hostile to the radical movement, sees such a "riot" begin, reacts to the police brutality with the disgust and horror natural to any normal human being, tells the story just as it happens—and for a wonder it gets into print. Truly, the Socialist leaders offer themselves as the shock troops for capitalism against the working class.

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Picket Lines

I: Automotive Workers in Toledo

A. B. MAGIL

TOLEDO.

"IT'S A state of war—capital agin labor."

The man with the straw hat turned around to his fellow-workers and repeated it, then glared back at the National Guardsmen lined across the street.

Thousands of Toledo workers have in the past few days learned this stern lesson—the lesson of the war between capital and labor.

I write on the fourth day of the epic struggle of the people of Toledo against the armed forces of the government, sent here to crush the strike of 1,800 workers at the Electric Auto-Lite Co. and to drive their thousands of sympathizers off the streets which they took possession of in one of the most militant uprisings of American labor. Two men are dead, dozens have been wounded, thousands gassed. Homes have been evacuated and Toledo has become an armed camp. Not since the days of the Seattle general strike in 1919 has a large American city been so close to civil war.

General strike!

Lenin warned against playing with the slogan of general strike, but here there is no play. These workers mean business. Four days against the guns, the bayonets, the gas bombs of the National Guards! Four days of attack and counter-attack, of hissing bullets, of bayonets plunging in the dark, of the stench and choke of vomiting gas, of taunts and jeers flung out like barbed wire behind which workers, armed only with stones and slingshots, stood off the onslaughts of the troops.

General strike! An electric torch that can weld together these scattered ranks into battalions of invincible steel that will bring the bosses to their knees.

"Bayonets can't make auto parts—tear gas can't turn wheels," says a leaflet issued jointly by the Unemployed Council, Auto Workers Union, Communist Party, Young Communist League and International Labor Defense.

Friday night, my eyes blinking with tear gas, I heard it in the heart of the battle zone, on Michigan Street—one worker, a second and a third: "When do we go on a 'general'?"

When?

The A. F. of L. leaders have talked general strike (with such sentiment among the workers they didn't dare to talk anything else!), but they are delaying, delaying, delaying—until the ranks of the workers are battered away by the National Guards and the federal mediator, Charles P. Taft II, millionaire publisher of Cincinnati and son of that President of the United States who once issued a famous injunction against the Toledo railroad strikers, has sewed things up.

Though a committee of 23 has been set up by the Central Labor Union to organize the general strike, though nearly 90 percent of the A. F. of L. unions have voted to strike, the A. F. of L. chiefs are waiting till June 1 to take a final vote—if then.

The militant labor organizations are working actively for immediate general strike, urging the workers to elect committees in every shop to lead it, calling a conference to enlist mass support. But thus far the A. F. of L. leaders have the upper hand; whether the workers will brush them aside and take action despite them remains to be seen.

The presence of the National Guards has infuriated the entire population and created a tremendous spirit of solidarity with the striking auto parts workers. Everywhere the demand rings out for the removal of the National Guards. The workers, massed at street intersections leading to the Auto-Lite plant, during lulls between the fighting, glare angrily at them or keep up a rapid-fire of taunts and derisive catcalls. "Hey, your mama's looking for you." "You smell worse than the gas bombs." "Where did you get the Boy Scout suits?"

"I'd love to crown those sons-of-bitches," says a young, tough-looking worker (the youngsters have been in the van of the fighting). "You wouldn't want to do that," says a big hefty guy. "That's Communistic stuff." He looks like the business agent of an A. F. of L. union—or a stoolpigeon. For ten minutes he has been doing nothing but attacking the Communists, though "I think these National Guards are a disgrace myself."

"They say it's the Communists been doing all this rough stuff," says an old man, "but I seen the union men throwing stones too, and they're right!"

"You call yourselves soldiers!" calls out another worker. "I'll show you a thumb." He holds up a big right hand; the thumb has been shot away. "There's the World War—see it!"

Who are these National Guardsmen who have been sent in to mow down the workers? Farm boys from the southern part of the state—the authorities said openly that the local guardsmen couldn't be relied on as they had "too many friends among the strikers." School boys, some of them, as the Toledo Blade of May 26 admits, kids with down on their lips, looking frightened and unhappy with their steel helmets and their too-big rifles. But their adolescent fingers have pulled the triggers that hurled death at working men and women.

Last night I again saw them in action. We were massed near Elm Street, near Michigan, as night was falling. Every now and then a worker would sneak into an empty lot and behind the shelter of a house, throw a stone in the direction of the guardsmen who were lined up fencing off Elm Street. A worker near me wields a slingshot. Near him an old man on crutches leans against a tree, refusing to go away despite warnings that an attack may come any moment.

Workers have just shown me the blood-spattered pavement where Frank Hubay was killed by a guardsman's bullet the first day of the fighting. A little further, at 1122 Michigan Street, I was shown a big gash torn out of a wooden wall where the bullet lodged that killed the second victim, 20-year-old Steve Cyigon. (Cyigon had served two terms in the CCC, was preparing to enroll in the Navy and his sister was a scab, but the bullet didn't know!)

Between the shelter of two houses I see the bulging form of Heywood Broun. Earlier that afternoon I had heard him regaling a group of workers at a meeting of the Musteite American Workers Party with the tale of his "arrest" by the National Guard. And that very day in the "liberal" Scripps-Howard paper, the Toledo News-Bee, which has been more piously aggressive in trying to break the spirit of the workers than any paper in town, there had appeared Broun's column in which he talked about his feeling "that the strike may degenerate into a weapon as barbarous and aimless as war," poured ridicule, both directly and by innuendo, on the workers and defended the National Guards and the police.

It was practically dark and all the street lamps had been put out the night before by the workers with well-aimed bricks. Suddenly I saw people begin to run in between the houses. I turned to go back, away from Elm Street. Too late; the National Guardsmen barred the way. I ran forward with others, only to run into the waiting guardsmen. We were caught in a trap; under cover of darkness, the guardsmen had sneaked around and cut off both sides of the street.

They began chasing everybody, beating some with night-sticks. A guardsman took me in tow. We were marched, about thirty of us, to military headquarters, only two blocks away.

I looked at the guardsman beside me. In the darkness I could only see that he was tall and dark and had the face of a boy. We

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Across America

walked a little apart from the others and he made no effort to hold me.

"Boy," he said softly, "I hate this job."

We walked on. "If it was some foreign enemy," he went on, "it would be different."

"Yes," I said, "you're being sent against your own people here." He nodded.

I asked him how much he was getting paid. "We don't know," he said. "All they keep telling us is we got to do our duty. I know duty is duty, but this is lousy."

"Are there many others that feel this way?"

"Some."

As we came close to military headquarters I said: "You fellows are doing the dirty work of Miniger (president of the Auto-Lite Company)."

"I know it," he said.

At headquarters I showed my press card and was released.

Later that night I was told that several guardsmen had thrown down their guns and said they were through with the dirty mess.

Pawns of the millionaire auto magnates, how long will it be before they too will understand? How long before they cross over to the other side of the street, the side of the workers, and fight shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy with something other than stones?

By the time this reaches NEW MASSES readers, the general strike will probably have been decided one way or the other. But however it turns out, the Toledo workers are writing history in bold and imperishable letters. Out of a strike at a small factory, a strike which was dying on its feet, there has come, as a result of mass picketing organized with the aid of a numerically weak Unemployed Council, such a mighty demonstration of working class courage and solidarity as should speak volumes to the Minigers, the Tafts, the slick labor misleaders—and the Roosevelts too—if only they are not too blind to read the handwriting on the wall.

II: Truckmen in Minneapolis

SENDER GARLIN

MINNEAPOLIS.

FROM THE street-car window on my way to the headquarters of the striking truckmen I suddenly see a squad of National Guardsmen marching. What's up? . . .

Out in front of the big unused garage at 1900 Chicago Avenue hundreds of strikers and their friends were gathered. A Negro truckman in overalls, a sawed-off baseball bat in his hand, is directing traffic. The garage is jammed with strikers. On an improvised wooden platform a member of the General Drivers' and Helpers' Union No. 574 is reading off the terms of settlement with the bosses. The microphone doesn't work and only those in the back of the garage can hear; they shout to the speaker, "Talk up, why don't you!" The only other equipment on the platform is a piano on which one of the workers strikes up jazz tunes when things get dull.

The strikers stand close against one another, pressing forward to hear the words of the speaker. It is hot and stuffy and no air comes through the windows because strikers, unable to get into the garage, block the windows from the outside in an effort to follow the proceedings. Everyone stands except about fifty or sixty-women—wives, sisters or daughters of the strikers—who are seated on chairs on the left side of the garage.

The union representative is reading from the terms of the settlement which the men are being asked to vote upon: (1) "That the strike of said local union No. 574 be called off immediately and all employees as of May 1, 1934, be returned to their former positions without discrimination, before any new person, not on the payroll as of that date, be employed —wages to commence as of date of re-employment." The speaker reads on: (2) "Each firm affected hereby shall adhere to and be found by all the requirements of Section 7-a of the National Industrial Recovery Act, to wit: Every code of fair competition . . ." A voice hurls from the floor: "Does that mean the bosses recognize our union?" The union speaker hastens to explain that "it amounts to about the same because it'll make the employers conform to Section 7-a of the N.R.A."

He proceeds with the reading of the agreement. "Point 6 of the agreement," he continues, "says that 'in the event that any employer affected hereby and his employees or their representatives cannot agree upon a wage scale or conditions of employment, such employer shall submit such subject or subjects to said Minneapolis-St. Paul regional labor board for arbitration'."

Another voice from the floor: "Ain't that what we've been fightin' against—these arbitrating boards?" The union speaker hastens to explain that the men will be "adequately represented" and will get "a fair and square deal." He reads on until he reaches the final point in the agreement: "the present wage scale of each employer for the various classes of employees, until and unless changed by agreement between employers and employees, or the representatives of employees, or by arbitration as provided in section 6 hereof, shall remain in force and effect for at least one year from date hereof."

"Brother chairman," comes a sharp call from the side of the hall, "I drive a cab and haul down less than ten bucks a week. Does that agreement mean that I can't get any more than that for a whole year?"

The speaker hastens to explain that "we can't get everything at once. We've got to be satisfied with what we can get at this time, and later on we can take the matter of wages and other grievances to the arbitration board."

There is a painful pause. And then someone in the front makes a motion to accept the agreement. "All those in favor will say aye," suggests the union speaker. A scattering of "ayes" follows. "All those opposed will say no." A thunder of "noes." The union spokesman looks confused until one of the strikers suggests that they had better take a secret ballot.

Everyone is ordered out of the hall, and only those with strikers' badges are permitted to return. The men line up single file and cast their ballots in two big paper cartons near the edge of the platform. It takes about a half hour for everybody to vote and during this time I look around at the women folk in the room. They look tired and worried, and many of them appear perplexed. A thin, angular faced woman of about thirty who sits next to me points out her John who is casting his ballot. "There he is over there," she tells me. John is a stocky truckman who earns $12 a week, his wife informs me. "The companies are spending $10,000 a day to beat the strike, why can't they use the money to give the men better wages? Most of these men are married and have families, and the only way we can get clothes is to beg for it from the Parent-Teachers' Association; and they sure make you feel it when they give you the stuff."

The ballots are all in, and the strikers prepare to hear the result, but no effort is made to count them. Suddenly another union spokesman appears and announces that "half of you men don't know what you're voting for; besides, there are some here who followed the good old Republican custom of voting three times." Roused by the insult, one of the strikers shouts: "Where the hell have you been all this time?" The boys on the plat-

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form decide to spend no more time on parliamentary amenities and shove Congressman Shoemaker, the Farmer-Labor demagogue, to the microphone. A husky six-footer, coatless and arms waving, Shoemaker tells the men to "vote for the agreement because it means at least a 90 percent victory for you." He does not analyze the agreements; he is vague on details, but he launches into flowery analogies between an army and its officers. "You have to support your officers," he screams, "or your army will be destroyed." Similar speeches follow. Groups of strikers shout their objections, but Grant Dunne, a strike committeeman, joins Shoemaker in asking for harmony. "We haven't had a fist-fight so far," Dunne remarks, "and it would be a shame if we started tonight."

Two previous ballots having been ignored by the union leaders, the vote is again put and in the confusion of the ballyhoo the chairman announces that the agreement is carried. "Be here at four o'clock in the morning," he shouts, "so that you can go to work if the employers sign the agreement tonight." The bosses did —probably even before the men voted.

Thus the 11-day struggle of the 5,000 Minneapolis truck drivers which electrified the country was surrendered after victory was virtually in the hands of the strikers.

At 11:30 p.m. on May 15 all trucks rolled into their garages. The strike was on. A complete tie-up was effected of all commercial trucks, transfer and storage trucks, grocery, mill, meat and packing house trucks, lumber, hardware and other building material trucks, as well as vehicles of all manufacturing concerns. Only milk, beer and ice trucks were permitted to operate. The owners had flatly rejected the union's demand for a closed shop, and just before the strike commenced the union modified this demand to the extent of insisting only on written recognition, but the bosses rejected this also.

What helped bring the Minneapolis truckmen's strike onto the front pages of every paper in the country was what the strikers themselves describe as "The Battle of Bulls' Run." After the strike had been on for two days, more than 2,000 business men held a "Law and Order" meeting in the West Hotel in Minneapolis and decided to recruit deputies to break the strike. The test of strength came on the following Tuesday when the trucking companies, fortified by hundreds of deputized "citizens" receiving $5 a day for their services, attempted to run trucks. The special deputies, armed with new, unpainted clubs fresh from the lathe, were drawn in a line on North Sixth Street. The pickets began assembling in the City Market as early as 4:30 in the morning, and when the deputies attempted to roll the trucks, they met with a barrage of rocks and loose paving blocks. Cornered with the uniformed cops timidly looking on, the $5-a-day deputies were mercilessly clubbed by the infuriated strikers. Scrambling frantically in an effort to escape, deputies discarded their badges and sought to slip through the lines. Following this crushing defeat, Chief of Police Johannes appealed to Dr. E. T. Boquist, commander of the fifth district of the American Legion posts to raise 1,500 special police from the ranks of the Legion, but this request was not granted on the ground that such an act "would be a violation of the American Legion constitution."

When the smoke of the "Battle of Bulls' Run" was over more than a score of special deputies were lying in the General Hospital and one of the leaders of the vigilantes, C. Arthur Lyman, was dead. Lyman, vice-president of the American Ball Company, who paid his men 20 cents an hour—laying off his machinists and using apprentices — was mourned by the Minneapolis Journal as "A Martyr for Law and Order," which declared that "in the welter of passion that ensued the red forces of communism and anarchy saw their chance to take control. . . . A fine, upstanding citizen, of high character, public spirited, civic minded, Arthur Lyman went to his untimely death, 'a Christian soldier marching as to war.'"

* * * * * *

The Journal blames the "Reds," but another "Christian soldier" writing to the same paper in the "What Other People Think" section, condemns the authorities for "sending a handful of untrained and unorganized recruits to cope with a mob of thousands of reds and sympathizers."

The next day Gov. Floyd B. Olson, Farmer-Labor arch-demagogue who recently demanded the "abolition of capitalism by law within a year" called out three companies of National Guard composed of 3,700 men to protect, presumably, the last twelve months of capitalism's existence.

An example of what Karl Liebknecht called "squaring the circle"—describing the creation of armies composed of workers to be used for the suppression of the working class—was dramatically revealed in the truckmen's strike. Pickets who were also guardsmen were ordered to report for duty. One wonders what might have happened if the troops had been called into action against the strikers with these forces in their ranks. . . .

The truckmen's strike opened with a fervor and determination that presaged victory. Picket lines were as "tight as a drum." A sympathy walkout of 35,000 building trades workers came in response to the heroic stand of the truckers. Police, scabs and special deputies were defeated at every turn. The Communist Party and Trade Union Unity League supported the strike and picketing in such an energetic fashion that Roy Weir, organizer of the Central Labor Union and Farmer-Labor representative in the Minnesota Legislature, found it necessary to tell a crowd of more than 20,000 workers: "We appreciate the help of the Unemployed Councils and the Communist Party which have sent in their best fighters in this strike." Sympathy for the strikers came from most sections of the population. Nevertheless, with victory in the hands of the strikers, the leaders agreed to a series of truces which opened the way for defeat by slowing up the tempo of the strike and providing the bosses with an opportunity for perfecting their strategy.

The triple-alliance agreement of the bosses, Farmer-Labor and strike leaders, left the workers where they were the day of the strike as far as union recognition and economic advances are concerned. Moreover, the men are sentenced to no-strike policy for one year.

But, as events have shown in Detroit, Toledo and elsewhere, the rank and file break through the barriers of N.R.A.-inspired agreements.

III: Longshoremen on the Pacific

IRIS HAMILTON

San Francisco.

DEAR MISS PERKINS: You wanted a first-class strike: Come to the Pacific, anywhere between Vancouver to Mexico, and you will see one.

History is on the run. You can't keep up. Out of breath, you can only pause and listen in for a moment, before the page turns:

"This tie-up is complete on the whole coast. Virtually no cargo ship sails the Pacific Ocean." TACOMA: General strike threatened if business men persist in demands for troops to guard waterfront. PORTLAND: Shipping at a standstill. All lumber camps and mills in the district shut down, owing to inability to ship products. LOS ANGELES: Walter Hannefield, 42, former policeman and private dock guard, arrested on suspicion of fatally shooting Richard Parker, young striker (20), in San Pedro Dock riot. Orange shipments rotting in the docks. SAN PEDRO: Crews of six steamers at San Pedro and Long Beach walk off the vessels after sailors', firemen's, oilers', water-tenders', wipers', cooks' and stewards' unions vote sympathy strike. SAN FRANCISCO: Shipping executives are battling with mounting accumulations of cargo on the San Francisco waterfront. . . Not a vessel left a port for coastal traffic today. . . .

The last stevedores' strike in San Francisco was in 1919. It was lost. The men's ranks were split up, an "alleged" company union was formed—the Blue Book Union—and all was "quiet" on the waterfront. There was an I. L. A.—International Longshoremen's Association—in some other ports, and in July,

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1933, a branch was formed in San Francisco. This is the only longshoremen's union. About the same time a local branch of the Marine Workers' Industrial Union was formed, the revolutionary seamen's union; A. F. of L. men are organized in the I. S. U.—International Seamen's Union.

On March 5, 1934 the stevedores demanded a dollar an hour, instead of the 85 cents they were getting, $1.50 overtime, the thirty-hour week to supplant the forty-eight-hour week, and recognition of the union—with hiring only through union halls—in other words, the closed shop. On March 21, President Roosevelt asked them not to strike. They called off the strike, and negotiations dragged on with nothing achieved. And so, on May 9, the entire Pacific Coast went on strike at eight o'clock in the morning.

It sounds quite a lot, the demand for $1.00 an hour—$30.00 a week! But it doesn't work out like that. As in every other branch of industry today, there are twice as many stevedores as are needed, and the work is staggered—making average earnings $12.00-$17.00 a week. Men are hired individually. This means they may be told to be on the docks at 6:30 a. m. and may wait till nightfall and get no lick of work to do. (Stevedores are a bad lot anyway, they laze around, *drink,* and oh my dear, the language they use!) If they were hired through one central authority, their union, the work would be rotated, there would be no useless waiting around. The stevedores who have been earning above the average are willing to earn less if the others will get some. Fair rationing of the work will avoid speed-up, one of the things even the muscled longshoremen dread—("a fifty-pound load with the guy shoutin' at you to hurry up, ten hours a day, ain't no joke!") But the closed shop—that's it! No more FINK HALLS (where the steamship agency hires the men—and scabs in strike-time). SMASH THE FINK HALLS.

"The employers declared today they would fight five years rather than grant the closed shop."

The mediators are in conference at the Palace Hotel—or is it the arbitrators?

"Conciliation has failed," said one newspaper. "The next step is [guess; reader I hate to tell you] arbitration." So Mr. Edward McGrady, Arbitrator Extraordinary of the Auto Strike and the Railroad Strike, and other lesser strikes, has flown out.

Finnigan and Casey, I. L. A. and Teamster Union officials, had to get ready for him. They prepared to meet their men. And the men prepared. They got together, that rank-and-file growing-wise, and they said: "Now what can these people possibly be going to suggest?" And they passed resolutions to cover every possible suggestion they could think of that the A. F. of L. officials might make. After this mass meeting, the district I. L. A. officials posted a notice for another meeting that night, expecting possibly a couple of hundred stragglers, from whom they would easily get a mandate to settle everything. Instead, Eagles Hall filled with 1,500 boisterous, determined stevedores. The officials staggered. The Strike Committee leaders spoke, men from all over the hall shouted. Three resolutions offered by I. L. A. leaders were covered by Strike Committee resolutions. "How on earth did they know what we were going to suggest?" those officials must have said to themselves. At any rate the resolution was carried that all arbitration proposals must be brought back to the rank-and-file to pass on.

(How "They" hate democracy when they get it!)

But come, Miss Perkins, we offered you a tour of the strike.

Here's the mass meeting on the empty lot to start off the picket-line. Around are the tall buildings—one is a cocoa factory and you can see the girls rolling tins rolling rolling tins tins tins along a belt as the sun catches them, tins and tins and tins and tins, the girls looking out on the mass meeting with its slogans DON'T SCAB. SOLIDARITY. WORKERS CLOSE RANKS. Harry Bridges says: "They asked me to come to the arbitration board's meetings, I said, 'Why should I'?" Later he says: "I'll tell you what, fellow-workers, I'll go, an' I'll come back every morning and tell you every single thing they say." Shouts and cheers. He hands his megaphone to another. And you realize, don't you Miss Perkins, that not from any of the San Francisco newspapers, not the Scripps, Hearst or the Chester Rowell-edited newspaper, have the men been getting the facts, the truth, or their side fairly stated, so that "the boss press" is coming to be on the same level in the men's minds as the P. G. and E. (Pacific Gas and Electric) for impartiality. The megaphone goes to Delaney, tall, straight, blond stevedore. His name is Schonmaker, really, but everyone calls him Delaney. He tells them the crew of the *Lurline* walked off in San Pedro this morning. "Attaboy!"

Let's follow the picket parade down the Embarcadero. Here it goes, 1300-1400 strong, with the blue I. L. A. flag and the Stars and Stripes at its head. The cops have to salute the flag, and it looks as if they are saluting the parade! Along the docks, their doors closed, the blue-coated and khaki-coated cops stand, five, ten, twenty, forty—look, forty cops before Pier 23! And look at the shiny blue cars, swell blue roadsters, marked SPFD, crawling alongside the parade. No billies swing, now. Six cops are in hospitals because they did. They just watch. Boat after boat is tied to the docks, San Anselmo, Swedish motorship Sunnanvik, San Lucas, San Vincente, Wapama, Tillamook, the Japanese Tatsuta Maru, Toba Maru, Avgon Maru. (The poor Japanese military men may have to call a halt on killing Chinese workers in a little while, if ships don't bring them munitions—stay where you are Tatsuta and Toba and Avgon, Maru, stay tied in to the 'Frisco waterfront and don't carry death to the Chinese peasants!—Oh I'm sorry Miss Perkins, I forgot, the munitions-makers might forego *some profits.* . .) Here's a U. S. Navy Receiving Ship, tied to the wharf. It takes on navy recruits. It says, underneath: U. S. NAVY RECEIVING SHIP — LONGSHOREMEN WANTED.

The parade has stopped at Fisherman's Wharf. And now they're telling the swarms and swarms of blue-coated cops, their police stars shining in the sun, the way those cocoa tins did in the window, that they may get a pay-cut next week when the question of reduction of municipal employees' salaries comes up . . . and the cops think . . . do cops think? . . . I've often wondered, *what do cops think?* . . .

Nothing moves along the waterfront but the State Belt Railway with its huge yellow freight cars — PACIFIC FRUIT EXPRESS—. They move slowly. The engineers look wistfully out at the singing, shouting picket parade. They are state employees, tied by yellow dog contracts; if they strike they will lose pensions, all the privileges entailed in being a State servant. The I. L. A. does not blame them. The stevedores just learn, silently, another lesson: the State and Federal governments operate in such a way that in a strike they are *automatically* on the employers' side: their employees *have to* be scabs.

The parade walks back in solid four-to-a-row formation, shouting: "Are we solid?" *"Y-E-E-E-S."* "Can they scare us?" *"N-O-O-O."* "Do we like cops?" *"B-OOO-OO-O-OO-O-O."* "Are we solid?" *"HOORAY!" "HOORAY!"* It ends at Steuart and Market on the empty lot opposite the I. L. A. hall. Let's go up.

The usual big hall with wooden floor and dirty walls. Awkwardly spelled notices, where to get relief, where to find the Strikers' Defence Committee "AND WHEN THEY PLACE PHONEY CHARGES AGAINST YOU (KIDNAPING, ETC.) COME IMMEDIATELY TO STRIKERS DEFENCE COMMITTEE . . ." And several license plates numbers chalked up on the blackboard: CADILLAC *5E 52-00-Scab Car* PLYMOUTH COUPE 6J 2345 *Transporting stores to Pier 26 and 28.*

"What are those?" I asked a longshoreman.

"Numbers of police cars that have been carrying scabs."

"What do you do with them?"

"We follow them."

"And then?"

"Oh, the scabs get eddicated."

The hall is full of men, sitting on benches, standing in knots, smoking, spitting, chalking up notices, handing round leaflets, getting picket cards. Outside in the sun, taxis come up to the ferry building, drop their fare, and ferry boats ply their way across the sunny blue of the Golden Gate.

"What are you doin' here?" a tall, fat, unshaven, slightly unsteady longshoreman comes up to me.

"Just want to find out about your strike."

"What d'ya want to know?" I have visions of Lauren Gilfillan and her questioning and her notebook.

"Well, for instance, what you're goin' to

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accept from the mediation board?"

"Oh, I wouldn't know 'bout that."

"What're your demands?"

"That's up to the leaders."

"Well, what do you think you're striking for?"

"T' be treated like white men, that's wha'."

"White men! With Greeks and Slavs and Negroes and Chinese and Portuguese and Spaniards—why 'white' men?"

"We wan' t' be treated like men, not animals. Jes' treated like men." He rolls away.

I go into the publicity office. Stacks of food there—bottles and bottles of milk, bread, fruit, vegetables, spaghetti . . .

"We haven't asked for relief yet either," a stevedore explains proudly. "This all come in voluntary from the warehouses. An' three hundred dollars come in voluntary. The city approves of the strike. Seven hundred and fifty free meals have been served to pickets in restaurants on the waterfront. They know we're in the right." I read a notice: IF YOU ARE DENIED CITY RELIEF NOTIFY YOUR STRIKE COMMITTEE.

"Has there been discrimination against strikers?"

"They try it. They tell the workers they must go out and work on the dock if they get relief; ask them if they belong to the Blue Book Union. But our delegations go and call on the supervisors." (A large committee of the striking men had to go before the Supervisors first and protest the scab-herding notices in flop-houses, soup kitchens and at relief stations, before they were taken down. These are appearing all over California. Yesterday one was torn down at San Jose—good old San Jose, Sunny Jim Rolph's pet town.)

The teamsters came out on the third day; the Marine Engineers are out. The seamen are out. "The Seamen are out!" THE SEAMEN ARE OUT. Yup. The seamen voted to support the longshoremen in their demands and to strike for their own demands. And the firemen, and the scalers, and the oilers, and the cooks . . . If any ship goes out of 'Frisco harbor it is a scab ship. Every ship is 100 percent on strike.

Now listen Miss Perkins, this may be a bit confusing to you because you're not used to getting strike news from the inside. So let me explain:

This is a first-class, tophole, wingding of a strike because it is solid, because there is no split in the rank-and-file, and the longshoremen have realized that the red herring "They" try to draw across the tracks is a herring; this is a well-disciplined strike, strong-in-itself, alert, solid. Every day another union comes out in sympathy with the striking longshoremen and for its own demands. The rank-and-file of an A. F. of L. union is learning that it cannot trust its A. F. of L. leaders.—Look at them. Edward McGrady, who, "it is alleged," has helped break and sell out strikes, the auto strike, the railroad strike; Timothy Reardon in San Francisco, State Department of Industrial Relations head, old A. F. of L. official who, "it is alleged," sold out the fishermen, the cotton pickers, the Imperial Valley lettuce and pea-pickers; who wired you, Miss Perkins, that "Everyone in Imperial Valley was happy" —when they were dying of typhoid, drinking stinking water, without privies, and terrorized worse than orphans in Bellevue psychopathic ward. Those are some A. F. of L. leaders, and the longshoremen are discovering it. There is, in fact, a singular strength and uncompromising straightness in the leadership in this strike, which looks as if the Chamber of Commerce contention that there must be "reds" in it somewhere might be true. Let's ask a stevedore.

"We've learned a thing or two since March," he says, nodding wisely. "We've learned some of those guys are featherin' their own nest. They let strikes be bought out."

"Who taught you that?"

"Oh, we learned. The longshoremen have been fooled too many times. We're gettin' smart now."

"Who—who taught you that?"

"I could only whisper that."

"Well, whisper it."

And he leans over, the tall, blond, blue-eyed stevedore and whispers: "The Communists."

It is popularly supported, the strike. It's a home-town, native strike. The stevedores come down from the Mission, South of the Slot: The fine old part of San Francisco where the rich don't live. North of Market Street they're outsiders, who came to grab when the grabbing was good . . . they made North Broadway and the Mark Hopkins Hotel and they're all as alien to San Francisco as the Ritz . . . but the Mission south of Market is ours.

Market Street really is a class line; and the Mission has a quite developed class-sense.

The Marine Workers' Industrial Union hall is a hive. It has had to organize a separate scalers' section—those who peel, paint, clean on the boat. There are already several hundred members. Picket captains are organizing their shifts, renting arrangements are made—striking sailors have nowhere to sleep, and the relief people wouldn't let them sleep on the docks—guards for the W. I. R. relief car, strike committee meetings, tickets, instructions . . . Every ten minutes another bunch of men walk up. Another boat has come to port and the crew has walked off.

"Got a card for me? I want to join the Union." "Me too." "So do I." Nine hundred and seventy-nine new members of the Marine Workers' Industrial Union in six days. Rube and Myrto are frenzied. They call on anyone, everyone, to help. "Can you type? Type out these demands for me." "Can you letter? Make out these posters." Heavens —another boat load!

And that's going on, Miss Perkins, in San Pedro, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Seattle, Portland, Tacoma, Vancouver, B. C.

Gay, chattering laughing boasting of how they "educated" the scabs, what they picked up while "cruising" for scabs. Stories—no smoking-room stories can beat these stories. "Have you heard the duffle one? A boat load of steel came in for the new bridge, bridge over the Golden Gate. Scabs were sent down to unload her . . ." They crowd round to listen. "Have you heard about the pineapples? A full cargo of pineapples from Hawaii came in on a mail-and-passenger boat. The boat had to set sail a day after arrival. And there was no one—NO ONE—to unload the pineapples. And the boat had to go back. So the pineapples had to go back to Hawaii, too." You can't blame the men for kind of being tickled at that, can you, Miss Perkins? (You know, you have taken away their every other weapon, but their every other friend, helper and weapon, the President, the boards of mediation, conciliators, arbitrators, some of their own leaders, the newspapers and the movies, the radio and the Churches, the chambers of commerce and the police, all, all are working for you, you can't mind if the men are kind of pleased that those pineapples went back to Hawaii, can you Miss Perkins?) Even Annie Laurie, the Friend of the Workingman, should approve of that. And what are the great big Matson Navigation Company and the great big Dollar Line and the Pacific Steamship Express and the N Y K and the Grace Line going to do about it? Sugar, oil, steel, bananas, pineapples, fruit and vegetables (picked by fruit-pickers at fifty-six cents a day) lie in their holds or in the warehouses or on the docks as engine-men walk off, and oilers and seamen and radio operators and stokers, walk off their boats.

This is an historical strike. It is the first time in the history of the American marine industry that a union has decided not to go back to work until the demands of those unions who walked out in sympathy with it have been granted, as well as its own. It is a great United Front strike—15,000 men out to date. Joseph Ryan, National President of the I. L. A. is speeding to San Francisco now to "mediate" the strike. His first plan, it is rumored, will be to attempt to make the longshoremen go back to work without the seamen's demands being met. He will try, it is said, to split the solid front, either by crafts, undermining the unity of all marine workers which has been achieved, or geographically, getting each port to settle separately. The fact that these tactics have been called to the attention of the strikers has led the entire San Francisco press suddenly to holler "Reds!" The president of the Chamber of Commerce issued a statement that the strike was "not a matter between employers and employees, not a conflict between capital and labor, but between American principles and un-American radicalism." The I. L. A. sent a dignified rejoinder:

> The longshoremen are striking only for what the NRA provides for them. It was to be expected that the Chamber of Commerce would inject a political angle into this controversy. If a very small number of longshoremen are interested in communism, that is their privilege.

The strike is an interesting example of the method by which the American workers are being radicalized. They seem to have in their minds two pictures, "Communism" and "Com-

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munists" as caricatured by the capitalist press, church, movies, radio, etc., and their own trusted, fighting, steady leaders, who, they keep finding out the more steady and the more loyal they are, the more likely they are to be dubbed "reds." Time after time an I. L. A. man gets up on a rostrum and shouts: "We ask for what the President of the United States has promised us. We ask not to be betrayed and sold out by our leaders. If this makes me a red, I'm a red, and proud of it." Men turn to one another. "He's right," you hear them say.

The strike committee has adopted the Western Worker as its official organ. Two editions of a baby Western Worker have already appeared, carrying contributions from stevedores. There is the news of the $25 voted by the Telegraphers' Union, and their resolution that "all telegraphers, their friends and families, agree NEVER to send their children to school, college, nor institute, nor pay toll to any football games, that has aided and abetted the factions opposing the longshoremen and their strike." There is the news note: "In 1921 R. S. Dollar invested $5,000—a mere stipend —which grew into the enormous fortune of nearly $8,000,000. The stevedores who made this money for him are broke." Red scares are ridiculed and exposed, the role of the capitalist press, of the universities, the "lies to split workers on color lines," nailed. News Flashes: "Former scabs picketing"—"Former scabs join the Union"—"I. L. A. condemns arbitration judge."

The workers need their own press. They have to deal with lie after lie after lie. You see that, don't you, Miss Perkins? First the papers say the strike is unjustified, the poor shipowners can't pay more, this was not the time just when, etc., etc., they should have had patience (patience!) waited (yes, *waited!*) for arbitration. Then they say the Communists started the violence whenever a cop beats up a picket; then they say threats have been made against doctors and ambulances. The strikers answer these stories in their living newspaper, the megaphone every morning on the empty lot opposite the I. L. A. headquarters. They tell how the ambulances have been used, like police-boats on the water, to take scabs to and fro; the men have seen perfectly well men step out of the sacred ambulance and steal through the little door onto the dock. Great outcry in the Press—the Communists are threatening the wounded! The strikers discuss at their newspaper-meeting what to do. "Let's picket the hospital, the scab has to come out sooner or later; if he's sick we'll let him go in the hospital, and if he isn't . . ."

"We'll make him sick!" shouts a voice from the crowd.

The scab picture is not a pretty one. First the big notice in the capitalist newspaper; the recruiting at the Fink Hall (the men stopped this with their picketing). Then the attempts to get car-loads of Negro strike-breakers. One got scared, and shot a gun as the strikers milled threateningly around the scab-truck, and he was arrested. The pickets are being careful: as they rushed in on one scab-gang at Oakland the cry went up from a hundred throats: "DON'T HURT THE COPS!"

The stevedores don't mince blows. The scabs are kept on freighters—scab-hotels on the water, the Diana Dollar, City of Los Angeles, Admiral Farragut. They daren't get off. The pickets are not gentle with a scab, even when he wants to come off.

There is the even less pretty picture of "our best people" getting their sons into scabbing. Bill Ingram, football coach at Berkeley, started it by recruiting football stars. 36 California students are scabbing. (Remembered strains from my childhood "The playing fields of Eton . . ." Did you ever hear that? "Play up, play up, and play the game.")? Herbert Fleishacker, the political-banking boss of California, a Regent of the University of California, the banker for the Dollar Line, has some sons. One son, a fraternity man at Stanford, called up his fraternity and offered the boys $15 to $20 a day to come and scab.

Plenty of college kids went: from San Mateo, and the Commercial high schools, and Berkeley. They wanted to stop after a bit. It was heavy work. They were chopping off their fingers, and dropping freight into the bay, and hurting themselves, and damaging property, and Christyourbackached—even at $15 a day. And at first the softhearted pickets let the college babies off. But after a day they found that the lane through the Red Sea of pickets which they had opened was being used for other scabs, on and back, off and back . . . And they closed their picket ranks. The food is rotten at the scab hotels, and the quarters cramped, and they can't shave, and Dr. Geiger of the Board of Health said they were unhealthy and there wasn't enough ventilation; but the kids can stay there and learn their lesson, say the pickets, now. And now, (don't you think this one is funny Miss Perkins?) now the scab-herders on the boats take a recalcitrant college man by the scuff of his neck and hold his nose to the porthole and make him look out and say: "See that line there? If you're not a good scab, we'll throw you to the pickets." So they work. But we have heard also that the scabs are threatening to strike.

In the evening there is a mass meeting. It is to greet Leo Gallagher, back from Germany. The morning after his arrival this little fighting lawyer was already in the courts, "stripping the mask from capitalist justice," as one stevedore said, defending some of the 100 longshoremen arrested on any old charges,—arrested for picketing. The judge told members of the Marine Workers' Industrial Union they were not on strike, because their union was not a legitimate one. "Oh yes it is," said Leo Gallagher. To the mass meeting have come many longshoremen. They tell a yelling, cheering bunch of 3,000 people how they are conducting their sector of a world-struggle. "The police are impartial!" cries Schmitt (ten uniformed cops are guarding the doors of the hall). "In other words, a scab is as good as a striker!" And you see in a flash the difference between two cultures.

Two hundred men are working on a waterfront where the average usual attendance of stevedores (working or waiting for work) was 3,500-4,000. What Schmitt says shows you that the men are conscious of their uncompromising leadership. It really looks as if labor has become aware, Miss P. "If we play our cards correctly we can't lose."

The last speaker points to the Soviet Union. His words send the audience into a delirium of enthusiasm. "We have seen a dream, and we hope a dream comes true in our own country." The vast hall empties. Just the janitor's left, sweeping up the dust, and the fiery slogans—FREE ERNST THAELMANN. Thaelmann was a longshoreman.

So you see Miss Perkins, it really is a first-class strike.

WORKER TO HIS BABY

Kick, little baby,
Kick and laugh. . . .
Then bawl and
Snap your diamond eyes
On your father. . . .
Curse him, little baby,
Claw and scratch. . . .

Fight, kid—
He loves the tingling pain
Of your keen
White finger-nails
Clawing blood
Out of his face. . . .

So raise hell, kid,
Raise hell
And squall.
Don't let me
Crush your spirit
As fathers do. . . .
Curse me
Scratch me
Kick me—
By god, you must be
A fighter, kid. . . !

Squall and yell,
Curse and fight—
Grow strong, kid.
Suck in bitter hatred
With your mother's milk.
Suck long and hard, kid.
Drain all the milk
From her breasts
Leave two
Soft flabby bags.
You must grow strong,
By god, you must fight. . . !

Curse, me, little baby,
Scratch me,
Claw my eyes. . . .
I love it. . . !

DON WEST.

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White Collar Workers and

Harvard Learns About Law and Order

EDWIN SEAVER

BOSTON.

IN A RECENT address Supreme Court Justice Brandeis said that if our college men spent half the time in the library that they spend in extra-curricular activities we should have much better educated citizens. It all depends on what you mean by extra-curricular and by education. In the last two weeks Harvard students have found themselves enrolled in a little extension course in capitalist law and order that has taught them more on that subject than could two years in the library.

Classes were held directly outside the Charlestown Navy Yard where the Nazi cruiser, *Karlsruhe,* was docked, and later in the Charlestown Municipal Court. The teachers were some 150 cossacks of the Boston police "red squad," and of course a judge. Degrees of "incitement to riot" are likely to be awarded to three students from Harvard and three from the neighboring Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Tuesday afternoon, May 15, Allen Kellogg Philbrick, Harvard junior and executive secretary of the local chapter of the National Students League, was arrested on board the *Karlsruhe* for pushing a bunch of anti-Nazi pamphlets down the ventilator which ran to the boiler room.

"Attention German sailors!" read one of the mimeographed sheets found by a cadet on board. "Let not Hitler lie to you. His promises have been broken daily. Your salvation lies, German sailors, in communism."

Philbrick was handed over to the marines in the Navy Yard, who didn't know what to do with him. The Marines handed him over to the Boston red squad who grilled him for four hours, but were also uncertain. "Say, can you tell me why these Harvard boys make such damn fools of themselves?" asked a cop.

The Boston authorities, overwhelmed by an international legal tangle beyond their depth, telegraphed to Washington for information as to what to do with the prisoner. When no U.S. Marshal showed up the next morning, Philbrick was released after signing a waiver of his rights to sue the police department on charges of false arrest.

The League against War and Fascism, with the N.S.L. of Harvard and M.I.T. cooperating, called for an anti-Nazi demonstration against the *Karlsruhe* to be held in City Square, Thursday afternoon, May 17, at 5:15. Two o'clock that afternoon Philbrick was kidnaped by eleven members of the R.O.T.C., bound, gagged and held in a room so that he could not be present at the demonstration.

At the same time about 100 reactionary students, essentially the same gang that had broken up the anti-war meeting in the Harvard Yard a month earlier, headed for Charlestown to try their obstructionist tactics again. One of them was made up to represent Hitler, another Mussolini; their placards read "We Want Love," "Down with War, Down with Peace, Down with the Hearts of his Countrymen," "Give me Philbrick or Give me Death."

By five o'clock approximately 2000 people had gathered at City Square. But before the meeting could begin a detail of 150 police and mounted officers swooped down on the crowd without warning. Instantly the Square was thrown into turmoil, the police displaying a magnificent impartiality in attacking demonstrators, anti-demonstrators and onlookers alike. Men and women were driven from the sidewalk into the street in front of motor vehicles whose drivers were told to "sound your horn and go right on through." Attempting to get through the traffic to the other side or to make for shelter, they were again driven back into the street to provide better targets for the mounted cops. Students were yanked from cars and beaten up, women were kicked, a child was ridden down, a number of men were ferociously slugged. Mallinger, of the I.L.D., was twice knocked unconscious. By seven o'clock 21 arrests had been made, including six students, a high school boy and five women, the police slugging and kicking their prisoners as they dragged them to headquarters where they were fingerprinted, photographed and booked on charges of inciting to riot.

"Was it admirable police efficiency?" asked the Harvard Journal, the recently formed liberal paper, in a front page editorial the following morning. "Or was it a sadistic field-day for a bunch of blue-coated near-morons?

"Those who saw the riot yesterday in City Square, who saw five policemen viciously slugging a man into bloody unconsciousness, who saw a nine-year-old child ridden down by a mounted policeman charging mercilessly into a crowd of spectators, who saw students in parked cars slapped, can have little doubt.

"Twenty-one arrests, plenty of cracked heads, no end of broken shins and bruised limbs! A field day!

"There was no riot until the police made one. There was no fighting until the police started fighting. Servants of the state! American cossacks!"

The trial of the 21 who were slugged began Wednesday, May 23. Attorneys for the defense attempted to cross-examine 16 cops, charging brutality and cruelty, but gray-haired lugubrious Judge Charles S. Sullivan ruled "we are only interested in the charges against these defendants. The methods used by the police have nothing to do with it." Repeatedly Judge Sullivan has interfered when cross-examination threatened to make clear the facts involved, dismissing defense attorney Donald J. Burke because his questions were "detrimental to the best interests of his clients," fining one witness twice for trying to explain what the I.L.D. is, another for not sitting down promptly. Three members of the Harvard faculty appearing as character witnesses for one of the students on trial were "excused on the ground that the questioning methods were incorrect." Peter King, longshoreman organizer for the Marine Workers Industrial Union, himself on trial, was censured for asking the officer who arrested one of the defendants: "If you didn't strike Gilman, how do you account for the fact that when he entered the police station his face looked like a hamburger steak." One defendant, who weighs 90 pounds, was accused by a 225 pound cop of making a swipe at him. Another cop was asked if he had cursed the crowd and replied: "No, I used the English language." A third, asked to describe what he meant by "following her," explained: "Well, the crowd followed her, and she followed and they followed following after."

Altogether Judge Sullivan has had a hard time keeping the student witnesses and spectators from laughing the trial out of court. However, there is every likelihood that 21 defendants will be adjudged guilty.

The Charlestown clash has produced an "unexpected flare-up in Harvard undergraduate opinion," according to the Journal. As a result of the police-provoked riot and the travesty of justice at the trial several hundred students, including many of those who went to City Square intending to disrupt the anti-Nazi demonstration, have had their eyes opened. Charging that the action of the police was "begun without cause, pursued with uncalled-for brutality, and resulted in the unjustified arrest of twenty-one people," a Committee has been formed, the purpose of which is "to further in every way a fair trial and acquittal for all those concerned."

In preparation for their report eighteen sworn affidavits of eye-witnesses, condemning the police have already been collected and will shortly be presented to Governor Ely in support of the Committee's demand for the immediate dismissal of Police Commissioner Hultman and Police Superintendent King.

It is to be hoped that the new organization will not disband once the *Karlsruhe* incident is closed. The need for such an organization is likely to grow increasingly urgent. The Committee should be made the basis for a united front at Harvard against fascism.

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Students Swing Into Action

The C. W. A. Workers Meet the Cops

MARGARET WRIGHT MATHER

WHEN cartoonists for the commercial press want to picture Mr. John Public, they sketch a frail man, timid, retiring, a tiny derby seated atop a worried brow. Generally he is depicted taking it on the chin; forever oppressed with taxes, apprehensive about the coming mortgage payment, he is the buffer between horny-handed Labor and silk-hatted Capital. If railroadmen want to strike, then the cartoonist has poor Mr. John Public digging deep into his pocket for extra freight charges. If the miners strike for living wages, then Mr. John Public —how these cartoonists weep and worry for him—goes shivering from his unheated house to the office downtown. He is forever getting the dirty end of the stick in this incessant war between capital and labor. That's how the cartoonist sees it.

Mr. John Public is the White Collar Worker.

That is the average cartoonist's conception. Mr. Public is the Doctor, the Lawyer, the School Teacher. He clerks in the A. and P., and he sells electric appliances. He is the great lower middle class. He once tried to own a home. Maybe even a car. He had aspirations of climbing into the upper brackets. Sometimes he even joked wryly of making out income tax reports.

Last Saturday he was down before the doors of the Welfare Department with a banner in his hand. He shouted "We won't starve!" and "We want relief!" The police rushed out and knocked Mr. John Public's derby off his head. They mauled him and knocked him to the pavement. They kicked him in the ribs and violated his last shred of middle class dignity.

The large representation of white collar and professional workers was a historic feature of the demonstration of 2,000 unemployed and relief workers who picketed the Department of Public Welfare in New York City May 26. Police attacked with savage brutality. In a battle lasting more than thirty minutes (the police used clubs, blackjacks and guns; rifles were carried by some) these workers defended themselves. Some used the sticks torn from placards. Scores were injured, including several police. Thirteen demonstrators were arrested. Eleven were framed on the serious charge of felonious assault (which carries a three- to ten-year sentence). Their crime was to dare defend themselves against unprovoked attack.

The demonstration had been called by the United Committee of Action on Unemployment and Relief, a united front body comprising unemployed, employed and relief groups of professional, white collar and manual workers. They came to protest the following:

1. The city administration's announcement that 15,000 to 20,000 destitute families are to be dropped from the home relief rolls June 1. Further drastic cuts are scheduled for the ensuing months on the theory that it is easier to starve in balmy summer weather than in winter.

2. Those remaining on work relief are to have their subsistence wages lopped off by heavy pay-cuts. The new system of cash relief, replacing food and rent orders, widely heralded as an ease to the families receiving home relief, is proving less tolerable than the former system. Home relief is now limited to a strictly subsistence food basis; no provision for clothing, shelter, medical care nor household needs.

3. The official terrorism against the C.W.A. workers' attempt to organize. To a recent protest against overtime without pay, a director, a certain Mr. Corsi, replied: "Give me the names of those that are dissatisfied. I'll fill their places with employes who do not mind overtime." In another instance, a supervisor known as "Hitler" Kontner stalked into a meeting of relief employes with a gang of American Legionnaires and threatened all with dismissal.

These were some of the conditions against which the demonstrators were protesting; these were the "childish complaints" to which Assistant Commissioner Howe referred when he refused to grant a hearing. (Commissioner Hodson was in Kansas City, telling the social workers there how his heart bled for his "clients.")

To many white collar workers who never before participated in a "riot" the newspaper reports proved a revelation. All played up the police casualties while the scores of demonstrators carried from the fray with broken heads were reduced to "three or four injured Reds."

The press does not realize that stamping every militant working-class action "Communist" has unexpected effects. Intended to frighten away the masses by raising a Red Scare, it actually serves to identify the demands of the workers with Communist action. The white collar groups, along with other workers, sense this. As Alexander Taylor, secretary of the Associated Office and Professional Emergency Employees—comprising teachers, engineers, stenographers, research workers and clerks on relief projects—explains: "Ours is not a Communist organization. But we are not afraid or ashamed to have Communists among us. We are learning that wherever there is action in defense of living standards, there you will almost certainly find Reds in the thick of the fight, and where there are Communist leaders, you may be sure there will be no sell-out."

The court that evening tried two of the workers arrested at the Saturday demonstration. White collar and manual workers packed the courtroom and protested. As a result one worker received a light sentence. The case of the other was postponed. An impromptu march afterward was attacked by the police near Forty-second Street and Times Square. More beatings, more arrests. The next day at Tombs Court the white collar men and women again attended the trial en masse. In the first two cases, the judge set bail at the extraordinary figure of $1,500 each. When the spectators shouted in amazement, the judge ordered the room cleared. Dozens of cops and plainclothesmen emerged from near-by rooms where they were hiding. They attacked with unprecedented ferocity. (A graphic newspaper account of this attack is quoted on page 9 of this issue.)

Such incidents occurring throughout the country have their indubitable effect: they weld the union of the white collar worker and the proletarian. As the Communists put it, the alliance of the working class with the lower strata of the middle class, is being effected. These professionals and white collar men come to militant class action. There they discover the Communists. And they fight shoulder to shoulder under the guidance and leadership of the true revolutionary party and the various organizations in which its members play leading roles.

The white collar workers today find themselves actual participants in the struggle. Many are no longer afflicted with the disease of spectatorism. These can never again be pictured by the capitalist cartoonist as Mr. John Public with the idiotic derby. Nurtured on the fiction that they belonged to a white collar "class" that stood above the battle, they now have their eyes open to reality as they are turned away from employment in droves, attacked, kicked around like ordinary industrial workers.

They come from a class, of course, providing potential Hitlerites. But if the real forces of revolution in this country — the Communists—do their work effectively, rapidly, indefatigably, then the white collar workers nationally will follow the example of their New York brethren and fight bravely shoulder to shoulder with the manual laborers.

As one participant in the Saturday demonstration—a former university instructor now an emergency teacher in adult education—put it while nursing his bruises: "The bitter but enlightening lesson of the class struggle is best taught at the point of actual physical conflict. I have just learned there are two classes in society and that I belong to one of them. You will find me there from now on."

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Early American Labor and Literature

ALAN CALMER

WE CANNOT properly speak of the existence of a body of working class literature in the United States until the epoch of imperialism. It was not until the first years of the twentieth century that men of letters like Jack London and Upton Sinclair identified themselves with the Socialist Party or that a worker-poet like Joe Hill emerged from the ranks of the I.W.W. Moreover, it is only today, with the development of the Communist movement, that we can begin to talk of an American proletarian revolutionary literature that is attaining maturity.

Nevertheless, it is to be expected that the struggle of the American proletariat during the last half of the nineteenth century, together with the beginning of the Socialist movement (chiefly among the German immigrants in this country), would be reflected at least in fugitive writings during this period. Most of the floating literature of the time may never be recovered; while numerous scattered poems, stories, and essays in rare labor newspapers of the time have yet to be collected. In addition to other literary treasures that some day may be discovered, we already know of at least two historically important groups of working class writings of this period. These are the songs and ballads of the fighting Irish and English hard coal miners of Pennsylvania, and the German-American Socialist literature composed in the United States before the beginning of this century.

The folklore that flourished in the anthracite region of Pennsylvania during the last third of the nineteenth century was of a very striking nature. Although the custom of balladry and minstrelsy had been transplanted from the British Isles, these homespun songs and poems were rooted deep in the life of the coal miners of the state. These ballads were spread by wandering bards and minstrels who were themselves miners. Isolated by the mountainous barriers of this section of the country, Pennsylvania proletarians created their own oral literature reflecting every aspect of life in and around the hell holes where they were forced to labor. Not only did they sing of tales told around the village green and barroom; almost all of their ballads are full of the serfdom of the miners, of the agony of child labor, of the horror of mine disasters.

But even more important, one finds in these ballads[1] the fighting spirit of the workers and the growth of their class-consciousness:

On three days a week, boys, our living we make,
And we work like mules for the bit that we ate;
But now we have a union let them say what they may:
We will strike for more wages than a dollar a day.

Supported by the forces of press and pulpit, the coal operators launched a widespread campaign of villification against the workers' unions, in order to demolish them. This is reflected in a poem written during the time and printed in a miners' journal:

What's that you say? What makes us strike?
Well, now!—you've hit a subject which I like
To talk about to strangers, for you'll understand
A very wrong impression fills the land—
That we are lazy, bloody, reckless men,
Who live beneath the ground, in a cave and den,
And come out once in a while to get the light—
To burn a breaker, kill a boss, or fight—
That miners ain't like other folks do be,
All is wrong, which I will let you see.
We're men like you—though not so finely clad—
Some of us good, and others very bad,
Just as you will find in any other set
Of men who work their daily bread to get.
A pretty independent lot we are likewise,
And will allow no boss to tyrannize,
We hate that, like the Devil hates the water
Blessed by the Priest—and so we ought'er.

. . . . . .

Gowen says he is the workman's great admirer,
While we, in turn, say he's the great conspirer
Against our price, our liberties, our rights,
And the instigator of one-half our fights.

These miners, who occupy a prominent place in the splendid revolutionary tradition of the American proletariat, fought determinedly against the onslaught of the coal operators and their Pennsylvania Cossacks. This conflict came to a head in the strike of 1875, in which the miners' strongest union, the old W.B.A., was smashed. One of the finest examples of how a literary form may serve as a direct weapon in the class struggle is the ballad, *The Long Strike,* written during the course of the strike in order to cheer the workers. In the midst of this major contest with their class enemy, the miners sang defiantly:

In eighteen hundred and seventy-five, our masters did conspire
To keep men, women and children without either food or fire.
They tho't to starve us to submit with hunger and with cold,
But the miners did not fear them, but stood out brave and bold.

Now two long months are nearly o'er—that no one can deny,
And for to stand another month we are willing for to try,
Our wages shall not be reduced, tho' poverty do reign,
We'll have seventy-four basis, boys, before we'll work again.

When the miners rose once more at the end of 1887—under the leadership of the Knights of Labor and in support of the railroad workers—John Hory, an Irish miner-poet, composed their battle song:

Here's to the Knights of Labor,
That brave and gallant band,
That Corbon and old Swigard
Is trying to disband.
But stick and hang brave union men;
We'll make them rue the day
They thought to break the K. of L.
In free Americay.

When this strike is at an end,
And we have gained the day,
We'll drink a health to our miner boys,
Both near and far away;
And our brothers on the railroad
In free Americay.

A number of other songs were written about the Knights of Labor, especially in the western section of the country. While many of the ones collected in the pamphlet, *Sing, Brothers, Sing!* (1886), seem to be written by sympathizers rather than by workers on the picket line, nevertheless they express the militancy of the workers. Most of them are new lyrics set to the tune of popular songs. One of the best known, which was written in California, includes the refrain:

Hurrah! Hurrah! Labor free to all!
Hurrah! Hurrah! hasten to the call!
Shout the joyful tidings, *King Capital* must fall;
Now we are marching for Labor.

The most famous one of all, *Storm the Fort, Ye Knights of Labor!* was sung throughout the West:

Strong entrenched behind their minions,
Sit the money kings;
Slavery grabbers, thieves and traitors
Join them in their rings.

. . . . . .

Who will dare to shun the conflict?
Who would be a slave?
Better die within the trenches,
Forward, then, ye brave!

Another deals with

Oh, the idle, useless things,
Worshipped as "Industrial Kings,"
Buying legislators, lawyers, courts and all,

while another, *The Bondholder and the Soldier*—sung to the tune of *Susannah*—reflects the development of the indigenous revolutionary tradition of America, from the first Civil War to the coming second one:

We met the foe on many fields
And drove them to the sea,
We thought the Union then was saved
And all our people free

O bondholder! Fear you no wrath divine?
The blows we dealt on Southern heads
Shall surely fall on thine.

Even before the Civil War, the American workers used the weapon of verse in their labor clashes. George E. McNeill, in *The Labor Movement,* recounts the incident of girl

[1] An American newspaperman preserved this "seam of folklore which once ran through life in the hard coal fields of Pennsylvania." He gathered them from the last survivors of the generation that composed and sang them. They are collected in his volume, *Songs and Ballads of the Anthracite Miner,* by George Korson. The Grafton Press, N. Y. 1927.

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workers in New Hampshire who, as far back as 1837, struck successfully against a wage-cut proposed by the mill superintendent, composed rhymes satirizing him and posted them on the mill-yard fence. "This is but an instance," stated McNeill, "of a peculiar method which some of the early strikers had of revenging themselves by making verses."

Another example of revolutionary poetry is given by McNeill in the same volume. The first number of the labor newspaper, *Voice of Industry,* published on May 29, 1845, contains the story of Mike Walsh, who was arrested for alleged libel against a New York capitalist. While in prison, he pencilled the following verse on the wall of his cell:

The wealth which ingrate tyrants wield
To crush and starve us—WE create;
The blood we shed on flood and field,
Give greatness to the MISNAMED great:
But short would reign this favored few,
Were we but to each other true.

One of the most curious connections between American labor and literature in the late nineteenth century is indicated by the frequent use which trade union leaders of the time made of poetic texts and quotations. In addition to McNeill, William H. Sylvis, whose premature death destroyed the ties which were being forged between the National Labor Union and the First International at the end of the sixties; Uriah S. Stephens, who formed the Knights of Labor; Parsons and Spies, Haymarket martyrs, and other American labor leaders were men of learning and used literary texts as effective instruments in their speeches and writings. The mark of these literary interests is found even upon labor documents of the period—as witness the verses which head the constitution of the American Miners' Association, formed in 1861:

Step by step, the longest march
Can be won, can be won,
Single stones will form an arch,
One by one, one by one.

And by union, what we will
Can be all accomplished still,
Drops of water turn a mill,
Singly none, singly none.

Sylvis' lengthy addresses are peppered with poetic quotations. His writings, too, occasionally possess a literary touch, as in this opening sentence from his essay, *The Poor Man's Home:*

"Poets and essayists have sung and written a great deal about the beauty and simplicity of the poor man's home, and theorists have employed the aid of art to prove that contentment and poverty are inseparable; but *The Cotter's Saturday Night, The Village Blacksmith, The Flat-Boat,* etc., as *illustrations* are far more welcome to the rich man's parlor than be the living *realities* which they represent."

Stephens' speeches contain references to Marcus Aurelius, Shakespeare, etc. When the Knights of Labor assembly held a memorial service for John Hobson, who died in 1871, Stephens suggested that a poem be written for the occasion. William Fennimore composed the verses, *A Fallen Friend,* which were written into the minutes of the K. of L. meeting. The poem is a stilted imitation of English romantic verse, as mediocre as the elegy, *The Fallen Chieftain,* composed by John James upon the death of Sylvis.

At the funeral of the Haymarket victims, their attorney, Captain Black, read a long poem dedicated to them. According to Black, it had been "handed to me on the train as I came hither, written by I know not whom." Here was the setting for a masterpiece. The author, however, was obviously not a poet but a crude imitator.

Albert R. Parsons—a native-born labor leader whose ancestors came to America on the Mayflower, who was beloved by the Negro people for his direct work in their behalf during Reconstruction, and who played a prominent part in the great railroad strike in 1877—frequently recited long poems from memory during his last days in prison. His last writings, penned in prison, contain fitting excerpts from the works of English prose masters—a quotation from Macaulay tracing the development of the American masses, a reference from Ruskin to the Paris Commune, etc. While on trial he delivered a nine-hour speech, prefacing his remarks by reciting a poem entitled *Bread Is Freedom.*

"That poem," said Parsons in the crowded courtroom, "epitomizes the aspirations, the hope, the need of the working class, not alone of America, but of the civilized world."

Like Parsons, Spies also turned his courtroom speech into a public forum, exposing the exploitation of labor. He began with a clear-cut statement of the class struggle: "In addressing this court I speak as the representative of one class to the representative of another." His speech belongs to the literature of labor. In it occurs a slashing reference to the erudition of the prosecuting attorney:

"Grinnell spoke of Victor Hugo. I need not repeat what he said, but will answer him in the language of one of our German philosophers: 'Our bourgeoisie erects monuments in honor of the memory of the classics. If they had read them they would burn them'!"

A letter by Spies, written from prison, was reprinted in a German-American literary journal. Its editor, Robert Reitzel, refers to the epistle as a stirring document, which he compares to a monologue from Büchner's *Danton's Tod.*

Robert Reitzel was the most distinguished German man of letters living in America. Born at the time of the German revolution, he came to America early in the seventies. In 1884 he founded *Der Arme Teufel,* the most important German literary magazine in America. Although essentially an individualist, Reitzel believed that the revolutionary spirit of Socialism was a powerful stimulus to literary creation. He understood the oppressive character of capitalism, and became aroused to action by all attacks upon the working class.

His stand at the time of the Haymarket case was very decisive. He did not content himself with writing letters, as did his American contemporary, William Dean Howells, but agitated at mass meetings and in the pages of his journal for the liberation of the victims of 1886. He warned the working masses that the bourgeoisie was out for the blood of their leaders. He advocated the use of force by the masses as the only way to save the Haymarket prisoners.

The Chicago case left a permanent stamp on the pages of Reitzel's magazine, as well as upon his own literary work. The Haymarket tragedy appears in his poems and feuilletons published in *Der Arme Teufel.* He believed that the murder of the Haymarket victims would arouse the working class to action.

Although German-American literature was an emigré product, transplanted upon foreign shores, yet that section of it to which Reitzel's later work belonged struck a vigorous note. Until it slowly ebbed away toward the close of the nineteenth century, German-American Socialist literature was the only body of belles-lettres in this country which voiced a strenuous protest against the injustices of American capitalism.

After the revolutionary period of forty-eight, many German journalists and men of letters migrated to this country. Scarcely one of them failed to compose verse reflecting some awareness of the class struggle. This literature extends from didactic writings by worker-poets and political polemicists to distinguished verse by outstanding German men of letters like Reitzel. Among the latter was Heinrich Strodtmann, who published an illustrated comic weekly in Philadelphia during 1853, and whose socialist poems show the influence of his three years' stay in America; to the former belongs Carl Reuber, a Pittsburgh worker who published a volume of Socialist poetry in 1872.[1]

With the founding of the Communist Club in New York in 1857, and with the development of the First International in America, under the guidance of Sorge, some of these immigrants began to propagate the ideas of Marx and Engels not only by means of lectures and articles but also by poetry, sketches, and fiction.

One of the most talented of them was Adolph Douai. Forced to leave Germany as a result of his activities in the Revolution, he settled in Texas, where he published the San-Antonio Zeitung, an abolitionist paper, in the eighteen-fifties. Driven out of the state by the slave owners, he moved to Boston, where his atheistic beliefs soon ruined his scholastic career. Arriving in New York in 1866, he drew close to the labor movement, became a Marxist in the early seventies, and was the first popularizer of Marxism in America. Although he was primarily a journalist and educator, Douai wrote many novels and stories. His novel, *Fata Morgana,* was published in 1859; another one, *Die Wilde Jagd,* was issued ten years later. He was one of the edi-

[1] Cf. the monograph, *Socialism in German-American Literature,* by W. F. Kamman, Americana Germanica Press (1917).

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tors of the New Yorker Volkzeitung from 1878 until his death a decade later, and during this period he wrote prolifically.

Marx's daughter, Eleanor, speaks in glowing terms of another German-American man of letters, Otto Walster. In *The Working Class Movement in America* written with her husband during their visit to America in the eighties, she declares: "There are two aspects of the poetry of a movement like that of Socialism. The one is furnished by the genuine proletariat, by their sufferings, their awakening, their feeling after hope, their aspiration, their understanding, their victory. . . . But the other aspect of the poetry of the working class movement is already more definite and distinct in form. It is yielded by the artistic souls that, famishing in the desert of today, are making for the promised land beyond, and mark their way thither by their singing. Of such as these is Walster, poet, dramatist, novelist, an artist to his soul's core. . . ."

Another Socialist writer, who was a temporary resident of this country, was Leopold Jacoby. At the meeting held in Cooper Institute, New York, on March 19, 1883, to commemorate the death of Marx, Jacoby wrote a long poem for the occasion.

At the same meeting, John Swinton, a prominent American journalist, delivered a brilliant oration on Marx to which even the numerous foreigners in the audience responded thunderously. Born in Scotland, Swinton came to the States at an early age, aiding the Negroes in South Carolina in ante-bellum days. In New York, where he worked as a printer, he became the companion of many leading American men of letters, including Walt Whitman. As managing editor of the New York Times during the Civil War, he became one of the leading journalists in the country.

Growing aware of the character of the "modern Moloch, capitalism" (American democracy he termed a "demonocracy"), he plunged his efforts and finances into the publication of John Swinton's Paper, which defended the cause of the working class. Although he did not join any of the labor organizations, Swinton remained a champion of the masses until his death.

In 1880, while in England, he visited Marx, whom he admired as "one of the noblest men and most logical thinkers" of the time. In a small volume, *John Swinton's Travels,* he wrote a tiny essay describing his visit with Marx which is a contribution to American revolutionary literature. Entitled *The Man of Earthquakes—Karl Marx,* it is an appreciation of the greatness of Marx and the essence of his work that is exceedingly rare for that time:

> Over the thought of the blabblement and rack of the age and the ages, over the talk of the day and the scenes of the evening, arose in my mind one question touching upon the final law of being, for which I would seek answer from this sage. Going down to the depth of language, and rising to the height of emphasis, during an interspace of silence, I interrogated the revolutionist and philosopher in these fateful words:
>
> *"What is?"*
>
> And it seemed as though his mind were inverted for a moment while he looked upon the roaring sea in front and the restless multitude upon the beach.
>
> "What is?" I had enquired, to which, in deep and solemn tone, he replied: *"Struggle!"*
>
> At first it seemed as though I had heard the echo of despair; but, peradventure, it was the law of life.

The American litterateurs of the time, however, remained largely indifferent to Marxism and, indeed, to the entire labor movement. "Where are the American writers of fiction?" Marx's daughter asked in 1887. "With a subject, and such a subject, lying ready to their very hands, clamoring at their very doors, not one of them touches it. . . . There are no studies of factory hands and of dwellers in tenement houses; no pictures of those sunk in the innermost depths of the modern Inferno. Yet these types will be, must be, dealt with, and one of these days the *Uncle Tom's Cabin of Capitalism* will be written."

It was not until two decades later that the first attempt at such a novel—Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*—was made.

Critics in Mufti

JOSEPH FREEMAN

THERE is at present a well-organized anti-Soviet campaign in the capitalist press, centering around political issues, which has its reverberations on the literary front. We have talked a great deal about the social basis of literature, about politics and poetry, about the class nature of literary criticism, and too often we have fulminated against the cockroach litterateurs. We have often failed to understand the circus because we concentrated on the trained fleas and missed the elephant. Of course, in its fight against Communism, the capitalist press is willing to use even fleas, harmless but annoying insects. The pages of the reactionary and liberal press are generously opened to repentant sinners who have seen the error of their unregenerate and oh so brief Communist days. Aureoled with the glory of the martyr's crown, these "persecuted" renegades run to Adolph Ochs or Oswald Garrison Villard for protection against a revolutionary movement that is scarcely aware of their existence. Some of these boys and girls (no longer infants at that, being on the shadier side of thirty) slept soundly through fifteen years of the October Revolution, nestling on the warm maternal bosom of nationalism. Today, with the milk of their post-graduate journal scarcely dry upon their lips, they shriek curses on the "petty bourgeois" Comintern. The case is clear: Dimitroff and Thaelmann are corrupt petty bourgeois bureaucrats betraying the revolution; the pure proletarian bolsheviks are the lads who leaped from their ivory towers into the renegade camps. The capitalist press, kind stepmother to political and literary orphans who slobber about the Red bogeyman, gently gathers these boys and girls into her capacious lap and feeds them lollypops until the day when the Reichstag bursts into flames per schedule and they are clapped into the same concentration camp with the "petty bourgeois bureaucrats" of the Third International. Until such a day the flea circus continues to play in a side tent near the elephant cage, which it is high time for us to visit.

More important in forming public opinion than all the little monthlies is *Section Five.* I am not referring to a branch of the secret service, but to a branch of the public prints, specifically to the book review section of the Sunday *Times.* This review is dull, but authoritative; the two often go together. It is read by solid citizens and by moulders of public opinion, including the journalists and editors of publications from the extreme right to the extreme left. It is the Voice of Bourgeois Culture, sedate, oily and definitive, like the local doctor or minister. It reviews all the books fit to print; and our studies of the relations between politics and literature would be enriched by an analysis of the May 20 issue of *Section Five.* We know, of course, that Marxist literary critics are propagandists; bourgeois critics believe in art, truth and impartial justice. That is why the front page of *Section Five* carries in large black letters the dispassionate headline: *The Dark Land of the Soviets.* This calm judicial statement captions a review by no less a person than the editor of *Section Five* himself, the very same J. Donald Adams who not long ago attempted in the pages of the *Saturday Literary Review* to exorcise the Marxist critics with the magic formula: *"propaganda!"* Our detached critic opens his review with the following scientific appraisal: *"Here are the two most remarkable books about Soviet Russia which have yet appeared in this country."*

You will never, even if you live to be as old as the *Times* itself, guess the most remarkable book about Russia until you read the impartial Mr. Adams. It is Tatiana Tchernavin's *Escape from the Soviets,* which has furnished a text for numerous sermons by the bourgeois literary bishops on the horrors of

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the "Stalin dictatorship." Of course, anyone who knows anything knows that what the bourgeois press now says about the "Stalin dictatorship" it used to say about the "Lenin dictatorship"—and even the "Trotzky dictatorship." We have not forgotten that Trotzky the Communist was a bad man; it is only Trotzky the anti-Communist who is a good man; a good Communist is a dead Communist. Seven years ago, when the American capitalist press fondly hugged the illusion that Stalin represented a return to capitalism, it vigorously applauded him, the identical press which now shouts hoarsely about the "horrors of the Stalin regime" and opens its pages to every renegade with anti-Soviet slander for sale. What really matters is not the alleged "Lenin," "Trotzky" or "Stalin" dictatorship, but the *dictatorship of the proletariat.* The capitalist press, the liberals, the renegades will damn whoever represents it and praise whoever attacks it.

That is why the slimy J. Donald Adams quotes approvingly from the still slimier Malcolm Muggeridge: "The poor little frightened soul of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is what I despise."

That is why the most remarkable book about the Soviet Union is Mme. Tchernavin's fantasy of flight, a volume so remarkable that J. Donald Adams calls it "one of the most moving, one of the most utterly convincing records of human experience" that it was his fortune to read, thereby placing it, presumably, in the same class with the confessions of St. Augustine and Rousseau, the *Dichtung und Warheit* of Goethe, Dostoyevsky's *Letters from a Dead House* and Gorky's memoirs. The book is in fact so remarkable that it "will be read when the present Kremlin dictatorship is an episode in history." Mme. Tchernavin will survive in the memory of man long after the October Revolution, which makes her greater than any other author who ever lived. And what makes Mme. Tchernavin greater than Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, Cervantes, Proust, Joyce and Mayakovsky? The mere fact that she repeats the stale old propaganda of the Eve Garret Gradys, the Marguerite Harrisons, the Bessedowskys. It is the old tale of persecution by the Soviet regime. And since the trained fleas have now made it fashionable to bewail the fate of Russian intellectuals, the capitalist press ballyhoos Mme. Tchernavin's magnum opus as a "document" showing the tortured life of Soviet scientists. At a time when honest, intelligent and courageous scientists and writers throughout the world admit that in no country is the scientist and writer given such opportunities or is so protected and encouraged as in the Soviet Union, the bourgeois press has sworn in various professional and amateur writers to bear false witness that Soviet scientists and artists are insulted and injured slaves. If Mme. Tchenavin has been hailed as the greatest author on Soviet affairs it is because, along with our local literary stoolpigeons, she has added her voice to the anti-soviet chorus so necessary to capitalism at this moment.

But the hysterical panegyrics of J. Donald Adams for Mme. Tchenavin's "document" by no means ends the anti-Communist campaign of *Section Five.* We know that the Soviet Union has no artists, only artists in uniform. Leonov, Sholokhoff, Tretyakov, Eisenstein, Meyerhold, Pasternak, Fadeyev, Pilnyak and hundreds of other gifted Soviet artists are sterile, subservient lackeys crushed by the "Stalin machine" which alas and alack did not have the advantages of a profound revolutionary education wherever the fleas got it. But is Russian literature dead? Thank heaven and the departed spirits of the Romanovs, it lives! *Section Five* which recently gave three lusty cheers for a book "exposing" the Stalin "literary dictatorship," has finally discovered "a new Russian writer of great talent." This writer's pen-name, we are informed, is Sirin, but his real name is Nabokov. And therein lies the seed of his "greatness," for "he comes from a distinguished aristocratic family which produced several Russians of note," including the author's grandfather who was Alexander II's minister of justice. Here at last we have a Russian writer who wears no uniform, at any rate not the uniform of the working class. Unlike the miserable literary slaves of Stalin, he is not forced to write about the proletariat, the revolution, the building of socialism. Sirin is a real artist who writes about "life." His hero, thank God, is not a shock-brigader, a collective farmer, a Soviet scientist helping to create a classless society; nor is the hero of *Luzhin's Defence,* one of those low-browed epigones; he is a "genius, a great chess player in whom the passion for chess has suppressed all normal human interests; in all other things he is a spiritual cripple, a grown up backward child." . . A streak of madness, [the reviewer tells us] runs all through the novel, a novel which "alone would suffice to give M. Sirin a very distinguished place in contemporary world literature." Could anything be clearer? A country occupying one-sixth of the globe and with a rich and vital artistic tradition is the graveyard of art; hundreds of talented writers describing with power the struggle of 160,000,000 people for a new world, are nothing but artists in uniform; but there, among the white-guards of Paris, the people who rot in irreconcilable hatred while the working class of their country shows humanity the road to a new life, there you will find pure art about spiritually crippled chess players.

And the May 20 issue of *Section Five* goes further; it brings the literary class war home. Disregarding the author's own possible intentions, it has seized upon Tess Slesinger's *The Unpossessed* as another instrument for the anti-Communist campaign. It would be interesting to know how seriously the talented Tess Slesinger takes the immoderate praise of the bourgeois press, how aware she is of the purposes to which her novel is being put. For my own part, I found the novel uneven—very dull in spots, very interesting in others. But Tess Slesinger's technical triumphs and failures are another story; what is important here is the reason for the praise heaped on her first novel, a praise out of all proportion to any possible merits the book might have. J. Donald Adam's review of it in *Section Five* is typical and clearly reveals what is behind the applause from the Right. The bourgeois press praises Tess Slesinger not for what she intended to do—to describe as truthfully as possible the petty bourgeois intelligentsia which she knows. In those circles she found people who thought or wanted others to think they were Communists, when they were actually weak, egocentric intellectuals adrift among conflicting social forces. There are indications in the novel that the author is perfectly well aware that these "Communists" are phonies; and that is greatly to her credit. But the danger arises from the fact that the novel contains no real Communist to offset the poseurs and self-deceivers. This gives the bourgeois press a welcome opportunity to dangle the phonies before the women's clubs as the real McCoy. It gives the impartial J. Donald Adams an opportunity to connect *The Unpossessed* with the anti-Soviet campaign by observing archly: "Russian intellectuals, Miss Slesinger, no longer exist as such; the remnants are scattered over the world or concentrated in the penal camps of Siberia and the Arctic." Mr. Adams, and not Mr. Adams alone, has dumped *The Unpossessed* into the anti-Communist arsenal alongside the lurid tales of escapes from Siberia and artists in uniform. This, of course, is not Tess Slesinger's fault; she did not, like the critics in mufti, set out deliberately to slander and denounce the Soviet Union and the revolutionary movement. But would she not have prevented this exploitation of her book had she created a real Communist as a foil to her egocentric Hamlets, had she artistically enlarged her own and her reader's social horizon? Would she have been so loudly applauded on the other side of the barricades had there been one clear authentic voice in her book speaking for the revolutionary movement? Was it not her duty as an artist to prevent inevitable misinterpretations, to make it impossible for the bourgeois critics to share Bruno Leonard's fantasy that he is Karl Radek?

I do not know where Tess Slesinger stands today in the struggle of social classes which so profoundly affects literature and art; but I hope none of our critics will jump to hasty conclusions. We have too often branded as "social fascists" writers who, wisely ignoring this injustice, have remained loyal to the revolutionary movement; on the other hand, some of us have been unable to tell when a writer was turning left or merely turning a somersault. But the present literary situation, so vividly illuminated by *Section Five's* concentrated campaign, should teach all honest writers and artists this simple and inexorable fact: in our era the "impartial" artist is a myth; the artist has the choice of wearing either the honorable uniform of the working class fighting for a free world, or the shameful uniform of the bourgeoisie seeking to perpetuate its regime of exploitation.

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Textile Front

HAROLD WARD

IN ANCIENT GREECE the Fates were weavers—and to the most dreaded of them, Atropos, we owe our word *atrophy,* "a wasting away of the body through imperfect nourishment; emaciation." Today, in thousands of factories all over the world Atropos is busy, cutting short the lives of workers, silencing the costly and subtle machines; breeding fear, terror, insecurity, war—Revolution. . . .

Twenty thousand American silk workers to be thrown out of work for an indefinite period because of over-production; a ten-weeks' bitter textile war at Verviers, Belgium, with no solution in sight; 38 percent drop in Italian textile exports, and savage wage-cuts in the Albina Botto mills; widespread short-time in the mills of Lille, Alsace, Roubaix, Turcoing, Normandy; scrapping of "redundant" machinery (and labor) in Lancashire increased sales of the same machinery to a dozen countries, including China, where Japan is invading Shanghai and Tsingtao; 37 percent increase in the 1933 profits of Courtaulds, the gigantic British textile combine; capital of the Japanese Toyo Spinning Company greatly increased, while wool spinning is to be reduced by 20 percent, perhaps more, for an indefinite period. . . . These are merely a few of the facts on textiles which one can read in the *conservative* European and Oriental press. Suppose we expand a little, moving from country to country.

France. Between 1928 and 1933 French exports of worsted yarn to Great Britain fell, because of heavy duties, from 307,000,000 francs to less than 11,000,000 francs in value. Overstocking and unemployment are on the increase. Since 1929 nine factories have closed down, and of the 525,000 spindles still officially "active" 81,000 spindles are actually idle. Unemployment in Alsace has increased about 20 percent; in Normandy short-time is up 20 and idle looms 25 percent. Japanese competition in Madagascar, French West Africa, Réunion, Syria, Turkey and Egypt are slowly strangling French overseas trade. Wage-cuts of 6 percent for men and 8 percent for women, and the most drastic curtailments in production (from 50 to 66 percent of capacity is the rule) are rapidly precipitating the issue between Fascism and Communism.

Belgium. The number of textile workers either completely or partly unemployed represents 35 percent of the membership of unemployment societies—the average for *all* industries is 30 percent. From about 25 percent of her total sales abroad, Belgian textiles have sunk (1933) to 11 percent. Of 553 textile companies, over 300 have experienced losses aggregating 243,000,000 francs, while 220 made profits of 83,000,000 francs. The protracted strike struggles at Verviers have caused the Government to request employers to *close all the mills* in the district, while numerous arrests are teaching the workers what they are to expect from a benevolent monarchy. In the Ghent district, according to the Thielt Chamber of Commerce, 96,000 workers are "normally" employed, but export difficulties have led to lay-offs running from 50 to 75 percent in the various sections. Proposed "remedies" include the abolition of the 8-hour day and the usual cut in wages.

Italy. Efforts to rationalize the cotton industry have proved futile. Numerous firms are operating below the cost of production, and would close up altogether if it were not for high fixed charges and taxes. Cotton output sold abroad is not sufficient to pay for the necessary raw cotton—of which, incidentally, total world stocks increased by 2,607,000 bales in January, 1934, as compared with the previous January. Speed-up and stretch-out are in full swing, aided by the Fascist trade-unions: extra looms and reduced wage-rates are systematically urged, with the result that all operations are frequently shut down completely by strikes, police terrorism and the boycott.

England. In the face of Lancashire's desperate plight, exports of British textile machinery have been increasing. Board of Trade returns report the sales of 20,628 tons of such machinery in the first quarter of 1934 as compared with 13,478 tons in the same period of 1933. The principal increases were to India (one of her own colonies!) Germany (from 250 to 705 tons), Belgium (!), Canada (from 207 to 614 tons) Holland, and Brazil. As for *Japan,* note that 1,500 tons of new textile machinery are destined to reach Tsingtao during this summer, to be used by the Kanegafuchi Company, in direct competition with British and other firms. As to *Canada,* the Dominion Bureau of Statistics at Ottawa reports a decrease in the 1932 value of wool of 8.5 percent compared with 1931; employment increased by 4.7 percent, with a *decline* in the total payroll of 4.1 percent.

Japan. Volumes could be written on Japan's textile offensive alone. But note the following: In Shanghai three great companies (Toyo Spinning, Dai Nippon Spinning, Shangha Seizo Kaisha) are increasing their present plants by from 700 to 2,000 looms and several new factories—all to be operated by the cheapest labor in the world. At Tsingtao other companies—Kung Ta, Nishin, Toyoda and Doko Mills—are undertaking extensive enlargements in plant and productive capacity. Even India is being invaded by Japanese textile capital; while Japan's textile products are flooding the world—as they might well be expected to, in view of the fact that, since 1920, her mills have increased from 201 to 267, her spindles from 4,061,580 to 8,209,314 and her looms from 53,622 to 81,552. With the help of savagely exploited workers who earn from 15 to 32 yen *per month* ($7 to $16 at par; actually, from about $5 to $12) it is easily understood that not only England but the entire capitalist world is being given the finest lesson in its history, and by one of its most brilliant pupils. A lesson whose moral has thus far been thoroughly grasped only by Soviet Russia and Soviet China.

Against this terrific race for higher productive capacity, lower production costs and greater "surplus value" must be placed the steady increase of "short-time" and reduced wages for labor, accompanied by such capitalist regulation as the scrapping of machinery, rationalization and amalgamation of plants. Regarding the latter the London Economist, discussing "The Crisis in Cotton" with special reference to the recent failure of Anglo-Japanese textile negotiations, states:

> In this desperate emergency, some of *the more far-sighted leaders* of the trade, have been discussing . . . a scheme for reorganization which includes *a compulsory levy for the purchase of redundant spindles,* and the setting up by the spinners of a control board to determine the maximum prices and to control output. The object of this scheme is to eliminate the incubus of surplus capacity which still hangs over the industry, and to *encourage the formation of a number of horizontal combines vertically,* connected with the manufacturing sections where this proves desirable. (All emphasis ours.)

Which statement is merely capitalist jargon for Fascism and the Corporative State, as applied to Great Britain. As a short-time note, the following figures, taken from a report of the International Federation of Cotton Spinners and Manufacturers. On the basis of 48-hour weeks, and covering the six months ended January 31st, 1934, *production stoppages* in the cotton industry amounted to.

Czechoslovakia	12.13	weeks
*Japan	9.72	"
Canada	9.64	"
Belgium	9.09	"
China	8.71	"
Great Britain	7.38	"

*Correction must here be made for the fact that cotton spinning mills in Japan operate on a working week of *120 hours:* on this basis the stoppage during the period amounts to only *3.89 weeks,* thus giving Japan the highest production ratio of the countries listed.

In the face of these facts, and thousands of similar import, it is small wonder that Mr. Samuel Courtauld, President of the giant Courtauld's, in reviewing the "best year since 1929," thus defined "obsolescence":

> A process or machine may be said to become obsolete as soon as *it pays to incur the additional capital cost* involved in installing a new and more efficient process or machine.

In good time, Atropos will deal with Courtauld's also.

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Correspondence

Ray Brook Sanitarium

To The New Masses:

Since I know the facts, please allow me to take a few exceptions to some of the statements made by De Graff Gordon regarding the Ray Brook State Hospital in The New Masses of May 22.

Many of the ambulent patients are allowed a certain amount of recreation in addition to having to do "state work" (which tasks vary from the lightest, of handing out of the mail, to the severest, which is waxing and polishing floors with a polishing machine). It is well known that patients have abused their privileges, frequently to the extent of suffering severe setbacks in health. I myself have seen some of the patients going down to the brook for a swim when they should have been indulging in nothing more strenuous than a walk.

Although I am not suggesting that Mr. Gordon overindulged in outside physical activity and laid the blame upon his "state work" when he declined in health, I wish to point out that as soon as he complained that the work was too heavy for him, it was discontinued.

Mr. Gordon also admits that he made a "remarkable recovery" after seven weeks of rest, and that he decided to leave for a sanitarium where he would "not be required to work." The time limit for the stay of a patient at Ray Brook is usually nine months. If he was fortunate enough, through the courtesy of the Medical Staff, to remain there longer, it is not only obvious that he could not "decide to leave," but that he should not have been admitted, since the New York State Hospital for the Tuberculous is a rest haven for the indigent residents of New York State, who cannot afford private institutional care.

Brooklyn. Abigail Woolf.

Tom Mooney Appeals

To The New Masses:

My Attorneys, Frank P. Walsh of New York City, John F. Finerty of Washington, D. C. and George T. Davis of San Francisco, filed my application for a writ of habeas corpus in the United States District Court for Northern California, at San Francisco on the 7th day of May, 1934, charging violation of the "due process of law" clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution on the grounds of my having been acquitted May 24, 1933, on one indictment which covered the identical material of the indictment on which I was convicted February 8, 1917, and that such conviction was the direct result of a premeditated and deliberate frameup conspiracy on the part of the prosecuting and police officials by concealing and suppressing evidence material to Justice and the defense, using vital testimony that they knew to be perjury, coaching of States' Witnesses that amounted to subornation of perjury, exhibiting the defendants to prospective States' Witnesses instead of having them identified in the regular manner, and generally inflaming the public mind of the community with highly prejudicial statements issued by the District Attorney and the Police Department and published daily in the newspapers before, during, and after the trials.

If the United States District Court denies this writ it will be appealed to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, and then the United States Supreme Court, if that be necessary.

The initial expense for this legal work places a tremendous burden of raising $5,000 upon my defense committee for briefing the great wealth of material in this eighteen year old case, stenographic, typing and other clerical help, office rent, supplies, printing and binding of briefs, postage, telegrams, telephone and transportation and traveling expenses for at least one of the attorneys, all of whom have volunteered their services without fee.

It will be absolutely necessary for me to take a Paupers' Oath if permitted by the Court to have the Federal Courts pay the actual Court Costs of my petition for a writ of Habeas Corpus.

This whole program will be in jeopardy if we are unable to raise this indispensable sum. This emergency compels me to plead with you for a donation to be used exclusively for expenses directly connected with this Federal Court Action. Your past generous support of this cause gives me hope that you will come to our immediate financial assistance. No contribution can be too large or too small. . . . Won't you please help us overcome this most unhappy situation? May I hope for an early and favorable reply to this very urgent appeal?

Please accept in advance my warmest personal regards, best fraternal greetings and heartfelt thankful appreciation for any consideration shown this communication.

Tom Mooney.

California State Prison
San Quentin, Calif.
5-12-34.

Address all communications and make all funds payable to the Tom Mooney Molders' Defense Committee, P. O. Box 1475, San Francisco, California.

[The appeal to which Tom Mooney refers has been denied by the United States District Court for Northern California.—The Editors.]

Newspaper Salaries—

To The New Masses:

Some New York newspapermen were inclined to scoff at a recent article in the New Masses by Philip J. Corbin titled *Are Newspaper Men Workers?* The complaint was that Corbin's figures on the pay of reporters and desk men, ranging from $30 to $45 a week, were exaggeratedly low. The New York Newspaper Guild has now made public the result of a questionnaire on salaries filled out by 597 news men showing that 387 of these receive less than $50 a week while the average pay of desk men is $37.86 weekly, reporters $45.63, rewrite men $53.35 and feature writers $74.37, with most of the latter receiving far less. In brief, all except the feature writers average far less than do the unionized printers and linotypers, whose scale begins at $60 a week and ranges much higher for unionized proofreaders.

Fat salaries for a few makes the average seem much higher than it is. In the whole city one feature writer draws $500 weekly, one $195, one reporter $175, one editor reported $150, two editors $140 and two $135. Six New York journalists get $95 weekly, six $90, eleven $85, six $80, nine $75, thirty-one $70, twenty-four $65, thirty-one $60, thirty-nine $55, thirty $50, thirty-four $45, seventy-eight $40, seventy-five $35, fifty $30, forty-four $25, forty-five $20 and thirty-five $15. Note how the numbers increase in the lower salary levels, and remember that this is for New York, the highest paid newspaper town in the nation.

As pay goes in New York these returns are far less than those shown in schedules for actors, school teachers, locomotive firemen and engineers, musicians and skilled mechanics. Note also that most of the journalists are college graduates while practically all have spent four years in high school.

On many papers, some of them the wealthiest and most reactionary, the pay was less than the city average. Reporters on the New York American averaged $40, the Bronx Home News $39.37, the City News Bureau $34.50, the Herald Tribune $42.86, the Evening Journal $33.57, the United Press $37.50 and the Post $34.50. The highest average paid reporters was by the International News Service, which has very few, with $72.50. The Daily News paid $67.50 average and the Times $50.77. In several cases these averages represent partial restoration of wage cuts and do not represent recent minimums in effect before the Guild was formed. Without really getting into action the Guild has already had the effect of boosting wages!

The average paid feature writers by the Herald Tribune show at $133 weekly, but this includes one man getting $500 a week. Excluding this rare individual the average for the paper is $47.50. Rumor is that the high-paid individual is Walter Lippmann, whose stuff is syndicated widely and hence is not paid for except fractionally by the Herald Tribune.

Other averages are: editors $100.83; artists $50.83; copyreaders $48.85; photographers $43.45; clerks $25.50; and copy boys $15.42. Questionnaires of the national Guild show that in Richmond the average weekly salary, including editors, is $35, in Rockford, Ill., $29, including editors. Verily, newspaper men are proletarians and do not know it. They might be called white-collar proletarians because they do not even enjoy the security in their jobs of experienced book-keepers who draw about the same pay.

Staten Island, N. Y. Arthur Hale.

—And Newspaper Wages

To The New Masses:

Once again the capitalist press has shown its class bias so far as its own workers are concerned. The Daily Newspaper Code Authority, openly dominated by the publishers, announced last Friday (May 18) wage amendments to the newspaper code which indicate the sort of justice newspaper workers can expect under the N.R.A.

Under the plan put forward by the code authority, minimum wages for reporters and other news department employes will range downward from $25 a week in cities of over 750,000 population to $12 a week in communities of under 25,000. There are only nine cities in the United States with a population of more than 750,000. The great number of newspaper workers fall in the classification affecting cities of between 50,000 and 250,000 population, where the wage recommended is $14, and those under 25,000. This means that under the N.R.A., editorial employes—college trained in the majority of the cases—will be earning approximately $13 a week.

Where is the $35 a week minimum wage which the American Newspaper Guild announced it was seeking? Where are the higher wages which the newspapers have been finding in mythical surveys by star staff reporters?

While on the subject of the press, it is instructive to note the silence of the New York dailies on the wholesale justice meted out by the Brooklyn Daily Eagle to its employes last week. Seventy-nine workers, the majority of them old desk men, reporters and other editorial employes with more than ten years service behind them, were fired without warning. How about the inclusion of these discharged workers in the reemployment surveys?

Brooklyn, May 19. Harry Kermit.

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Books

Men of Iron

OUT OF CHAOS, by Ilya Ehrenbourg. Henry Holt and Company. $2.50.

EHRENBOURG begins: "The men possessed the will and the despair,—they held out. The animals retreated." Construction at Kuznetsk was commencing: "Men came from all the four corners of the land. . . . In Moscow this was called the Five-Year Plan. Moscow planned, and Moscow did not budge. . . . Over the country railway engines strained to the bursting point. An anguished whistle issued from their breasts: do what they could, they could never keep pace with man. . . . Two hundred and twenty thousand men were engaged on the construction work there. Day and night workmen built barracks, but of these there were never sufficient . . . Men lived as in a war. They blasted stones, felled trees, and stood up to their waist in icy water, fortifying the dam . . . Fly-by-nights came to the construction works. They received boots and coat, and decamped for another construction works. . . . The road-paving brigade smashed the record. . . . On April fourth the fires in the first blast-furnace were lighted."

At the end Ehrenbourg writes: "From Kuznetsk men went to Mondy-Bash. From Mondy-Bash some pushed on to Temir-Tau, others went to Telbess. Men were plentiful in the land and the taiga yielded a few yards every day." These men spoke of the civilization and quiet of Kuznetsk. They fought in spring to hold back the rivers. May Day came, and Shukhaiev spoke: "We must remember the words of Lenin: Lenin said that iron was the chief foundation of our civilization. We must see to it that the Kuznetsk Giant is adequately supplied with our Siberian ore." The veteran Samushkin "faltered his sentences, stammered, mopped his forehead with his sleeve. But he spoke with feeling, and the workers listened to him." He concluded, "With such men we shall get iron, too, because they are stronger than iron. As an old Red irregular, I say to you that now I can die in peace, because, comrades, we have real men."

The fight against chaos is Ehrenbourg's theme, and the molding of character in that fight. Among the many who come to Kuznetsk is Kolka, a bored youth from Sverdlovsk. Kolka becomes a leader, a fighter. He becomes a man, with a brain and a will. Volodia Safonov, on the other hand, attends classes in Tomsk and writes in his notebook: "If I had lived a hundred years ago I should have been perfectly adjusted. I should have despised men as I do now. But they could have been creatures of my own species. It is impossible, of course, to despise the bees or the rain." He, too, goes to Kuznetsk, chiefly because he is in love with Irina, who has left Tomsk to teach the children of the Kuznetsk workers. But Irina is in love with Kolka. Volodia's nihilism leads Tolia Kuzmin to sabotage. Volodia goes home and hangs himself.

There are other characters in abundance—too many, some critics will say. But Ehrenbourg is not writing about the eternal triangle; he is concerned with men and women under the first Five-Year Plan. He does not isolate Kolka, Irina, and Volodia; on every side other lives touch theirs. And all these lives are being shaped by such a revolution as the world has never seen before. There is chaos in the book, just as there is chaos in the Russia Ehrenbourg describes, but out of the chaos order is coming. It is Ehrenbourg's ability to recognize the forces that are creating order that gives his book its unity. Confused and undirected as the various lives he portrays seem, they have a historic meaning that he perceives and communicates to his readers.

His achievement is all the more striking because he insists on treating his characters in terms of their intimate personal problems. His book is less objective than Kataev's *Time, Forward!,* and is therefore not so stirring but more memorable. What particularly impresses one is the realization that, though personal problems obviously exist in the Soviet Union, they are essentially new problems. In Irina's love for Kolka there are factors that could not exist in a capitalist country. Varia's unhappiness, when Glotov leaves her, is a very real unhappiness, but it is complicated—and alleviated — by emotions and attitudes that only the revolution could have made possible. Even Volodia, though his antecedents are recognizable enough, is by no means a character out of Dostoyevsky; his *Weltschmerz* has a peculiar tinge, for he is not only a misfit but also a misfit in a world in which misfits have become anachronistic.

Other writers have suggested some of the new qualities of life in the Soviet Union, but they have taken them so much for granted that they have failed to make them clear. Ehrenbourg, perhaps because he has spent so much time outside of Russia, has managed to communicate to western readers his understanding. This alone would make his novel one of the most important, for us, that the Soviet Union has produced.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

People Without Work

PEOPLE AT WORK, by Frances Perkins. John Day Co. $2.50.

DELEGATIONS of workers going to Washington to lay their grievances before Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins have at best obtained nothing but the promise of an "investigation." Sometimes they cannot even see her but are put off with a message that the Secretary of Labor is too busy with important affairs to see delegations of rank-and-file workers.

If they insist upon seeing Miss Perkins herself, as did the forty women needle trades' workers the other day, then the labor secretary sits upon a dais above them, listens for a brief period but soon becomes impatient and cuts short the interview with the statement: "I shall have to make a study." Whether the workers' protest is against terror under N.R.A. codes, speed-up, long hours, and continued low wages, or against the proposed deportation of an organizer like Edith Berkman—the result is the same. Even liberal newspapermen seeking true figures on the extent of unemployment have been put off with an evasion. The labor secretary freezes up the moment an issue is pressed; she raises her lorgnette and dismisses the worker or the inquirer in the manner of *la grande dame.*

Now comes Frances Perkins' book, *People at Work,* explaining her philosophy of life, and the reasons for her evasions become clear for all to read. She is a politician writing in defense of capitalism and of the N.R.A. against radical attacks. She would of course clean up the worst mess in industry's front-yard; such "abuses" as child labor and the 12-hour day, 7-day week, in steel mills must go. She would minimize the effects of unemployment —admittedly chronic since "always in the United States about one-tenth of the wage-earners are without work"—by a system of "unemployment reserves." She offers no definite plan of unemployment insurance, but suggests that "any insurance scheme adopted might be so developed that employers who prevent unemployment get some benefits in reduced premiums, thus encouraging all efforts and plans for stabilization."

This concern for financial returns to employers is characteristic of the book, and it is in this basic defense of the profit system that Miss Perkins shows herself for what she is—a faithful servant of Wall Street and its government. From "The Backdrop" introduction where she sketches enthusiastically the rise of "our basic American fortunes and industries" to the closing pages of the 288-page volume, her theme is:

> *"Our industries and the profits from them will never be either safe or sound* until they provide an environment and opportunity for the people who work in them which is as good as human ingenuity can devise and fit for the children of God." [My emphasis. G. H.]

Profits then must be "safe and sound" for capitalists to enjoy. The N.R.A. must provide "reasonable returns to capital." "Our delicate system of production" is "mobilized by profit possibilities." Well-managed corporations provide intelligently and effectively for "the stability of investment." It is necessary to recognize wherein lies "the security of investment." It is necessary to recognize wherein lies "the security of the investor and . . . in the long run, the security of the finan-

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cial institutions of the nation." So runs Miss Perkins' argument. "We" must be "fair" to labor or "our own" investments will not be safe.

It follows naturally from this underlying concern for stock- and bond-holders' investments that Miss Perkins sidesteps the actual facts about unemployment in the United States in the spring of 1934. While dividends have been increased under the N.R.A. and production has risen, more people are in need of relief than six months ago. This conspicuous fact in the general press has been "overlooked" by the labor secretary. Indeed, between November, 1933, and April, 1934, the number of cases receiving relief in leading cities increased 11 percent, according to Federal Relief Administrator Hopkins. But the Secretary of Labor nowhere mentions this growth of destitution under the N.R.A.

She presents figures, indexes, for March, 1934, as compared with the month in which Roosevelt took office a year before. She claims that 2,750,000 persons had been put to work in manufacturing alone, not including "the 110,000 reabsorbed by the railroads; the 300,000 who were given jobs by the C.C.C., the people employed in Public Works and in the Civil Works and several hundred thousand others in active occupations not covered by the reports of the Department of Labor." Yet even the reactionary American Federation of Labor, consistently underestimating unemployment, claims an employment gain during the same period of only 2,780,000 in *all* industries and occupations throughout the country! And a realistic estimate of unemployment made by the Labor Research Association found approximately 16,000,000 still jobless in March, 1934.

But these black facts about unemployment and destitution in the United States after a year of Roosevelt and nearly a year of the N.R.A. do not fit into Miss Perkins' picture-puzzle of "New Deal success." She devotes eight pages to unqualified enthusiasm for the cotton textile code, with its wages of $12 and $13 a week. But she barely mentions the fact that workers "are not so well pleased with the speeding up, through which they do in eight hours what they did formerly in ten."

Her only interest in strikes is to break them. Therefore of course she does not even think it worth while to justify the strike-breaking practiced by her department in sending her assistant Edward F. McGrady to end the coal miners' strike in the autumn of 1933. Again now she has sent him to the Pacific Coast to call off the longshoremen's strike. Her only interest in union organization is to turn it into a vehicle for keeping the workers quiet, in "cooperation" with capital.

The labor secretary's silence on these basic questions of the workers' struggle is more eloquent than her utterances. Most significant of all is her complete silence about the terror used by employers against workers who have dared to strike under the "New Deal." Scores are arrested. Strikers are murdered on the picket lines. But Miss Perkins writes blithely on about how "democracy" mobilizes this power of association and "cooperation."

GRACE HUTCHINS.

Evolution of a Liberal

MODERN ART, by Thomas Craven. Simon and Schuster. $3.75.

In an article on the progress of painting which appeared in the Dial in 1924, Thomas Craven concluded that the "glory of the (modern art) movement rests with examples of individual nobility. Post-Impressionism has given the world genuine artists, men with intelligence and creative wisdom."

At a time when American millionaires were still loath to invest large slices of unearned increment in the paintings of Matisse and Picasso, Craven expounded the merits of these artists with the full force of his conviction. In breaking down collectors' sales resistance the art dealers found his articles useful. At the same time, Craven unmercifully flayed the dealers as a greedy lot responsible for the artist's wretched plight in modern society (just as pacifists blame the munitions makers for causing wars).

In 1931, or Year III of the depression, Craven brought out *Men of Art,* a thick volume of picturesque biographies of personalities in art since the end of the middle ages. He now completely renounced his earlier probing into psychological nuances of art appreciation, and bluntly declared that great art needed no special key, that it was an intelligible interpretation of life itself. The glories of Post-Impressionist art he now reduced to the lonely figure of Cézanne, replacing Matisse, Picasso, and the other fallen angels with Rivera and Benton, because of their "social content."

He also advanced a theory of exceptionalism for American art: our artists are in no danger of falling into the snare of abstraction and introspection, of art for art's sake, because "we build and invent, destroy and replace, attaching no value to our handiwork beyond that of function and service." Incidentally Craven shares this viewpoint regarding function and service with Henry Ford.

And now, in the Year V (depression reckoning) appears another fat book by Craven devoted exclusively to muckraking modern art. Described by the publishers as a sequel to *Men of Art,* it is actually an expansion of the tail end of that book, with a few unimportant additions.

It opens with a lurid description of Bohemia, including autobiographical details calculated to stir the envy and admiration of sex-starved artlovers. The history of Bohemia, the only true center of which is Paris, is traced from the middle ages to the present days. In the third quarter of the nineteenth century, we are told, the Bohemian district of Montmartre still drew serious artists. But "by the end of the next decade (1800-1900) Montmartre was beyond redemption. The Moulin de la Galette, now a low-class dance hall for soldiers, working men, shopgirls and laundresses . . . appealed to dissolute painters on the hunt for color and the coarser forms of sexual commerce."

What drove the "better element" out of Montmartre? It seems it was the greed of the French middle class, which put Bohemia on a commercial basis. And when Bohemia fell, art went with it. Craven sums up the effect of the Parisian system as follows: "Woman is the curse of the artist. She no longer inspires, she dominates him. The artist, being weak, impressionable, and incapable of self-discipline, in other words, Bohemian, inevitably acquires the tone and characteristics of the stronger personality, the prostitute." So now we find (eternal) woman sharing responsibility with the art dealer for the ruination of art and artists in capitalist society.

The exposition of this thesis, occupying nearly two-thirds of the book, consists of a sequence of biographies that form a fragmentary, superficial account of European art of the last sixty years. A single page is given to Seurat, but it takes the author sixty pages to wring every thrill out of the lives of Van Gogh and Gauguin, not omitting the later's "taste for dark meat" (referring to the Tahitian women).

The first twentieth century eruption of extreme individualism in the Fauve movement is considered by Craven "the culmination of anti-bourgeois tendencies." Here he mistakes anti-philistine for anti-bourgeois tendencies. Actually Fauvism, and its successors, Dadaism and Surrealism, fall, except for one phase of German post-war Dadaism, entirely within the orbit of bourgeois ideology. Cubism and its progeny, also typical late-capitalist phenomena, are likewise misunderstood by Craven, who considers them meaningless because they have no subject matter.

Having laboriously disposed of the Post-Impressionist artists and their aberrations, the author is at last ready to face forward, to expose those fundamental social issues which even Bohemia can no longer ignore. This involves a change of scene—from Europe to America—and another background sketch in which our red-blooded author is again the hero. He exhibits his Anglo-Saxon antecedents, which presumably qualify him "for the leadership of a genuine American expression," in contrast to "Stieglitz, a Hoboken Jew without knowledge of, or interest in, the historical American background."

He rambles on, moaning over the passing of the frontier, talking glibly about the significance of subject matter, again and again evading the class issues involved. Finally the defender of American art comes through with a skimpy chapter on his contemporaries. He describes John Sloan as "a social radical and a deadly realist . . . who has waged many a battle for social decency." He hails as a "landmark in American mural painting" the cheap ballyhoo of capitalist exploitation painted for the Kaufmann department store in Pittsburgh by Boardman Robinson, one-time radical. He finds that Bill Gropper "has spurned the shelter of the studio to chart a definite

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course in modern life," but somehow neglects to tell us what that course is.

Craven winds up with the sweeping conclusion that the four horsemen of modern art are George Grosz, Thomas Benton, Rivera, and Orozco. They have snatched art away from the studio esthetes and given it "a social content." What is "social content?" This Craven does not explain because it involves the crucial question of class content and class alignment. He is not prepared to see it through and admits his own petty-bourgeois reactionary position.

He admires Rivera because he has brought art into the market-place, but regrets that he "has come to view the world from the bias of Marxian dialectic" (a nice reversal of Rivera's retrogression from a revolutionary to a renegade position). Craven has similar fears for Orozco. About Grosz he has no fears, and rightly—the man is a has-been. And about Benton he no longer has any doubts.

"Benton . . . has a healthy realism which, whether our social soothsayers like it or not, may carry us safely into a better society." So if the working class is ready to give up Marx and Lenin to follow Benton. . . . "It is my guess that in a more sensibly planned and orderly society of the future, this great drama of lawless change which he has painted, will stand as one of the supreme arts of the transitional period, and will be valued because it is veracious experience and not futile prophecy."

Craven explains away the confusion and disorder of Benton's murals on the ground that they are essential components of his portrayal of social chaos. In other words, Craven defends against meaningless abstract art those social contents whose meanings and implications are unclear or abstract—this is the meaning of "social content" to the petty-bourgeois mind which is not prepared to face the realities of the class struggle.

O. FRANK.

Politics and Fiction

THE GREAT ONE, by Henry Hart. John Day. $2.50.

Bayard Stuart, "the great one" of Henry Hart's novel, is a romanticized likeness of Boies Penrose, the late gentleman from Pennsylvania, Republican political boss, aristocrat, hog, cynic, and crook. Like Penrose, our hero is born into a prominent Philadelphia family with a silver spoon in his mouth, graduates from Harvard with ripe political cunning, an inordinate greed for power, and a vague desire for social reform, is housebroken by the political machine which defeats his candidacy for mayor of Philadelphia, and ends up as state boss and United States Senator of the prevalent thank-you-for-check trust-my-services-have-been-satisfactory variety.

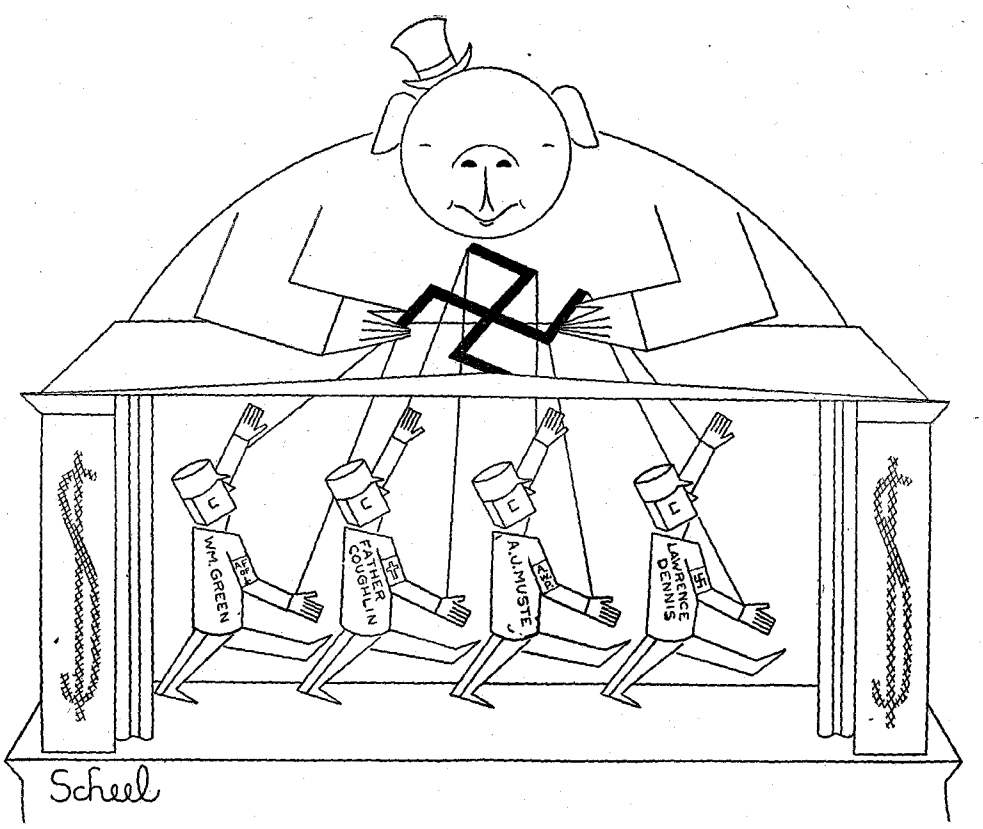
Curiously and unfortunately political novels are rare in our literature, and insofar as he has attempted such a novel for his first venture Hart deserves a good deal of credit. The trouble is that he has not been political enough, by which I mean that he has been too much concerned with individuals and not enough with history. The spectacle of a magnificent specimen like a Boies Penrose going to pot may be fascinating in itself, but the real story is what made him get that way. The real story goes beyond politics into economics, and it is the chief weakness of *The Great One* that Hart treats of politics as a self-contained entity, a game of power in a vacuum, rather than as the servants' quarters of big business.

Consequently, he lapses into sentimentality. Looking for a first cause for his hero's downfall he finds a woman; for a second cause, his defeat for mayor. Yet Hart has his hero born on the day of the Lincoln-for-President parade in Philadelphia, that same Lincoln for whom his father and his father's class have the most cynical and open contempt and whom they intend to use in their war to crush their southern rivals.

The truth is that by the standards of the ruling class then and now the life of a Boies Penrose or a Bayard Stuart was not a failure but a howling success, one increasing crescendo of power and glory. To have the old buzzard dying, therefore, in a vanity-of-vanities-all-is-vanity mood is highly sentimental. This is to imply that his life has been an empty one, that he has not been true to himself, whereas actually his cup has been filled to overflowing with the sweet juices of corruption, with the active undermining of the American democracy and betrayal of the American masses whose interests he was supposed to represent.

What Hart should have left us with is not pity for Bayard Stuart but a healthy hatred, hatred for the individual confidence man and for the whole interlocking mechanism of big business and politics he so ably and gladly served. We are not asking the novelist to stand in judgment; history would have done that for him had he given it the chance. The Bayard Stuarts do not stand or fall by any arbitrary system of ethics. They stand or fall with their ethics, which are only the ideology of the class in power.

EDWIN SEAVER.



Truth About Russia

INDUSTRIALIZED RUSSIA, by Dr. Alcan Hirsch. The Chemical Catalog Co. $3.

The fact that Alcan Hirsch is a prominent American engineer may make other engineers and other professionals sit up and listen when he says that Soviet planned economy is succeeding and that the Soviet Union is a great place for any engineer to work. He adds an excellent book to the voluminous literature and other testimony, some of it from the camp of the enemy, proving that while capitalism decays, socialist construction progresses at an unprecedented rate. The anti-Soviet propagandists are having a hard time of it these days, trying to convince anyone that Hitler is correct when he talks about starving Russia and Ukraine, in the face of such overwhelming evidence of Soviet advance.

Hirsch says that he writes this book because conditions change so rapidly in the U. S. S. R. Books that were written six months ago may be already out-of-date, so rapid is social change in the land where workers rule. An illustration of this fact is inadvertently provided by Hirsch himself. When he left the Soviet Union there was still a food shortage. Today all my friends in the Soviet Union write me that they can buy anything they need in the Soviet stores as well as in Torgsin. The shelves are laden as never before with quantities of consumers' goods at reduced prices, the first fruits of the first year of the second Five-Year Plan. So at least one chapter of Hirsch's otherwise illuminating books is already out-of-date.

Dr. Hirsch writes with simple directness and clarity, without literary pretentions, of

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what he himself saw in Soviet Russia, and the result is a forceful, convincing style. He lays no claim to being a Marxist, but his interpretations, even when he is not quite objective, are mostly correct. One is impressed with the idea that there is an honest engineer, an acute observer, an alert intelligence, capable, as how many American engineers working for the Soviets were not, of grasping something of the world-shaking significance of what is happening in the proletarian country.

As Chief Consulting Engineer for the Soviet Chemical Industry, he had unusual opportunities to travel throughout the U. S. S. R. and observe the Soviet workers and their achievements in widely separated areas and in industries outside of the newly created chemical industry. He is therefore equipped to write as he does about the agrarian revolution, living conditions, education, finance, religion, and Soviet culture. In one or another of these chapters he answers most of the current slanders about the Soviet Union being spread by the fascists and their allies, the White Guards.

There are mistakes—such as when he says that the Soviet Government and the United States Government are the two great bulwarks of peace. Only the first half of this statement is true. Despite such errors, this book is as good a volume as any I have read to use in combating anti-Soviet lies. It is written in language that any worker will understand, and is so loaded with factual material that it will also be interesting to the person who has followed Soviet developments closely.

LISTON OAK.

A Mirror for the Bourgeosie

THREE PLAYS, by S. N. Behrman. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

These three plays present a distillation of Sidney Behrman's brilliant talent, and a definite implication of his motives as an artist. Although fanciful exaggeration, straight character portrayal, and high comedy are his varied media, he strikes a consistent satiric note that implies a sharp criticism of all those brilliantly decadent and ravishingly witty persons who charm the American bourgeois drawing-room.

Serena Blandish, or The Difficulty of Getting Married, is a deliciously implicit comment on the idleness and hypocrisy of all high society, with particular reference to its marriage machine. When Serena, the personification of genteel ingenuousness, finds herself favored by the impossibly exotic Countess who carries red flamingoes in a cage on the roof of her limousine, and when the stylized Lord Ivor Cream attempts a seduction of Serena "at his rooms," the satire becomes pointed, revealing, and valuable.

More realistic and universal is the serious *Second Man,* which is a dissection of Clark Storey, a young writer with "a facile clockwork soul." This is a study of the struggle between heroism and expediency in one individual. The second man, or Storey's *alter ego,* is the intelligent personality who struggles to achieve an uncompromising idealism in the face of his equally intelligent practical self. Storey is in the dilemma of the charming, too civilized man, who trades the bread of a sober conversation for the tidbit of repartee, who straddles the fence of tolerant indecision, who, too sophisticated, sacrifices the almost attainable ideal for the attractive compromise. He falls because he is a product of a comfortable and effete society which will accept his mercenary standards in exchange for his aristocratic quips.

Meteor portrays a consummate egotist who rises to unprecedented heights as a financial wizard and then becomes gripped in the destructive vise of his own power. All considerations of humanity and social perspective leave him when self-worship and greed take hold. Although there is an uncomfortable taint of the supernatural in this work, and the ending is inconclusive, the play is a powerful history of a warped soul; of the transition from the poetic, free, fiery youth who brags: "Jack Reed and I were pretty close to Lenin in Russia!"—to the operator of a ruthless capitalistic racket, who, in order to vindicate his brutal methods, affirms: "Lenin's motive wasn't altruism but revenge on the Czarists who shot his brother—the first Utopian who knew how to handle a machine-gun." This could be a fine play, were its issues clearer and its ending more decisive.

Mr. Behrman's prime consideration in all his plays is with ideas, rather than with characters or stories. He is, very likely, our most intellectual dramatist; and, like Molière, whom he resembles both in brilliance and in implicit social comment, he neither steps through the lines to deplore circumstances, nor makes a bow via a reforming preface. He states in a satiric manner, and that statement is worth a world of pointed morals, as far as artistic and intellectual effectiveness is concerned. His writing has understanding, edge, and, most of all, it sets up a circulation of the imagination. A cynic, he makes no affirmation of faith in anything, for he is intellectually beyond O'Neill's latter-day nebulosity, and beyond O'Neill's case histories.

Behrman proclaims no message to the revolutionary writer or revolutionary movement. Instead, he offers an analysis. But he is a gifted analyst of that primarily important relationship, the individual and society, and as such, his plays have a valid and provocative value for the revolutionary intellectual.

E. Y. GILBERT.

A Lively Corpse

THE NEW INTERNATIONALISM, by Clark Foreman. W. W. Norton. $1.75.

The author of this book, who is a member of Roosevelt's Department of the Interior, traces the rise and fall of *laissez-faire* capitalism and concludes that the world is entering the stage of a "new internationalism" based on national planned economy and inter-governmental trade. He nonchalantly lumps together Turkey, Italy, Germany, the United States, and the Soviet Union as examples of countries which are putting into effect national planning. As if the so-called "planning" in capitalist countries, plunging them deeper and deeper into a morass of contradictions, were comparable to the real and successful central planning of Soviet Russia which rests on a socialist system of production and distribution in which the institution of profit and private property has been abolished!

Mr. Foreman, while presenting a number of interesting and indisputable facts, is astonishingly naïve in his interpretation of them. No informed person would dispute his claim that *laissez-faire* capitalism has broken down and that increasing governmental control over trade and business has been the result. But there is little indication that Mr. Foreman realizes that the intensified nationalism of recent years and the rise of Fascism and near-Fascism constitute the last desperate attempt of the capitalist class to save its system. The bitter struggle for foreign markets, the higher and ever more provocative tariffs, the international trade and currency wars, the growing danger of large-scale military conflicts, and the fake "national planning" of capitalist-controlled governments all reflect the severity of the economic crisis and the hectic, confused attempts of the ruling class to find a way out.

Most misleading of all is Mr. Foreman's chapter on "Socialist Internationalism." Here he asserts that "after the events of 1933 only the wishful thinkers could hold out hopes for a world system based on international socialism." This typifies the attitude of a growing number of commentators today. Since the increasing success and stability of Soviet Russia have made predictions of the breakdown of the U. S. S. R. less and less plausible, capitalists apologists get and give consolation by daily announcing the collapse of the world revolution. Overlooking entirely the tremendous inspiration and impetus that a successful socialist economy in the Soviet Union provide to the workers everywhere else, these observers argue that this very success of the U. S. S. R. proves that Moscow is abandoning the idea of an international socialist order. This is indeed strange logic. Mr. Foreman forgets that, though Hitler came to power in 1933, it was also in 1933 that Russia had the biggest harvest in its history with the mechanization and collectivization of agriculture winning through to a great and lasting victory. This achievement, with its unmistakable message to the peasants and farmers of other lands, constituted an unprecedented step towards world socialism.

Hitler's accession was, of course, a serious setback to the international working class. But what of it? Is the story over? Is history ended? Evidently Mr. Foreman thinks so. In an analogous manner the capitalist class thought that socialism was finished when Lenin retreated to the New Economic Policy in 1921. The point is that socialism in the world at large as well as in Soviet Russia does not and cannot triumph over-night. It meets temporary defeats; it makes strategic detours. But

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it goes forward confident and unbeaten, mightily amused, incidentally, at the touching funeral orations of Mr. Foreman and his brother soothsayers.

CORLISS LAMONT.

Study of a Child

CHILDREN OF THE POOR. Anonymous. Vanguard Press. $2.50.

A story of the poor and the autobiography of a bastard, this book is also a poignant study of a child up to the age of thirteen, so thoroughly and carefully done that it may become a classic and a source book for the teachers and leaders of children. For the appreciators of literature, however, poverty is here pounded home endlessly; and the author remembers well. Speaking of the rancid charity butter, he says, "Charity must taste bitter to prevent aspiration." His description of a boy's first economic fumblings, his first thefts, his first jobs and his bosses, is classic in its objectivity. Another fine part is his presentation of the initiation of a whore; his sister becomes one before he knows the meaning of it; he witnessed the making of another—a girl raped for sixpence, and at the age of nine or ten. The poor of his day are religious, patriotic drunkards, and the children are starved before they are born.

Unfortunately, the style is British and literary in the worst way. Fred R. Miller, in one short story, has done as well as the author of *Children of the Poor,* on the literary apprehension of indigence. So has Stephen Crane. And another anonymous writer, author of *Poorhouse Sweeney,* ought to be considered in this connection. To say nothing of Edward Dahlberg.

Moreover, the author writes as if his were the only poor family in sight, as if he did not live in a working class section. He fails miserably to show how his family could be so poor, in his locale of New Zealand, although he once mentions the neighborhood peculiarities of New Zealand's economic setup. The chief trouble is that, although Mr. Anonymous has conceived his material well, although he remembers clearly and sees rather broadly, this book is diluted, sublimated bitterness, youthful indignation allowed to mould with arteriosclerosis. It may well be that he does not dream of the imminence of a new world shortly to come by force of events, and is thus satisfied merely to record the hypocrisy of the church, organized charity, etc.

But there is an overflow, a leftover; he has done his job with such marvelous thoroughness that his book becomes an amazing probe into the mind of a child, so well hammered out that it does not seem to matter in the end, when the first-person hero is taken by the police to the reformatory—for the reader has looked into the microcosm of a child, seen the totality of what it means to be a child in this adult world, seen, indeed, that it is the external world which makes the child (who, as we have somewhere heard, is to be tomorrow's citizen)—and this is a unique achievement for Mr. Anonymous!

ROBERT WHITCOMB.

Workers Sing!

AARON COPLAND

THE Workers' Music League, a branch of the International Music Bureau, has recently issued the first adequate collection of revolutionary songs for American workers. According to its foreword, the Workers' Song Book 1934 is made up "exclusively of original revolutionary mass, choral and solo songs with English texts, (the first to be made in America). The composers represented are members of the Composers' Collective of the Pierre Degeyter Club of New York City, an affiliate of the Workers' Music League. With three exceptions the songs were all composed in 1933 as part of the work of the Collective."

Every participant in revolutionary activity knows from his own experience that a good mass song is a powerful weapon in the class struggle. It creates solidarity and inspires action. No other form of collective art activity exerts so far-reaching and all-pervading an influence. The song the mass itself sings is a cultural symbol which helps to give continuity to the day-to-day struggle of the proletariat.

To write a fine mass song is a challenge to every composer. It gives him a first-line position on the cultural front, for in the mass song he possesses a more effective weapon than any in the hands of the novelist, painter or even playwright. As more and more composers identify themselves with the workers' cause, the challenge of the mass song will more surely be met.

Composers will ask: "what is a good mass song"? In answering this question we must not forget that the opinion of the trained musician will not always coincide with that of the masses. We as musicians will naturally listen to these songs primarily as music, but the workers who sing them will in the first instance decide how they apply to the actualities of the daily struggle. In their eyes the music will not necessarily be of primary importance; if the spirit is right, and the words are right, any music will suffice which does not "get in the way." Composers will want to raise the musical level of the masses, but they must also be ready to learn from them what species of song is most apposite to the revolutionary task.

A good case in point, taken from this first book of American workers' songs, is that of *The Scottsboro Boys Shall Not Die* with words by Abron and music by L. E. Swift. This is the only song in the volume which has already been repeatedly sung by large masses of workers, yet judged from a purely musical standpoint it is certainly not the best song in the collection. The explanation is simple. The issue of the Scottsboro Boys is close to the hearts of class-conscious workers; to these workers the fact that the text of the song does not constitute great poetry, and that the music is effective only in a rather flat-footed and unimaginative fashion is of secondary significance. Nevertheless musicians must continue to insist that the music be of the finest calibre, not for "esthetic" reasons alone, but because a better musical setting will make a song a more thrilling experience and thereby increase its political drive. Swift himself has written better songs musically in the "Three Workers' Rounds": *Poor Mr. Morgan, Red Election,* and *Onward to Battle,* built on an old form of English folk music. Yet these have not taken hold. Our conclusion should be that a first rate mass song must be satisfying in text and music to *both* worker and musician.

On the whole, Carl Sands seems to me to have written the best songs in this present collection. In various ways his work can serve as a model for future proletarian composers. *Mount the Barricades* is an excellent mass song with a simple musical line and unconventional harmonies; *Song of the Builders* for chorus with piano accompaniment has rhythmic variety plus a natural setting of the words; *Who's That Guy* is an amusing kind of "play-song" intended for use with dramatic action. These may not be great songs, but they display a directness of attack and a sure technical grasp which is refreshing.

The songs of Lahn Adohmyan included in this volume are more ambitious. Adohmyan tries for a revolutionary content through use of a revolutionary musical technique. He is not afraid of harsh harmonies and a jagged voice line. These things need careful handling if they are not to result in music which is ungrateful for performers and unrewarding for listeners. Judging from Adohmyan's elaborate *a capella* choral setting of Joseph Freeman's poem *Red Soldiers Singing* and from the mass *Song to the Soldier* one would say that the composer is not always as careful in these matters as he should be. This is the more to be regretted because Adohmyan's music possesses real vitality and a character of its own. It is to be expected, however, that as he ma-

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Workers' Song Book 1934. The Workers' Music League, 25 cents.

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tures, the aspect of his music which does not allow it quite to "come off," will be overcome. Already he is outstanding among the younger proletarian composers.

Jacob Schaeffer, the radical movement's veteran choral conductor and composer, presents a different problem in his three songs *Hunger March, Strife Song* and *Lenin, Our Leader.* It is this: can a composer use the musical speech of the nineteenth century to express revolutionary sentiments? One thing is certain: we cannot ask Schaeffer to write in an idiom which is not his own. And it is only natural that, belonging to an older generation, his musical speech will not be as "up-to-date" as that of his younger fellow-composers. But whatever the idiom used, we can demand revolutionary music that is first-rate in quality.

Schaeffer's compositions, however you look at them, seem unnecessarily conventional in spirit. This basic conventionality is sometimes made even more glaring by what would appear to be a conscious attempt on the composer's part to be "modern." He is at an added disadvantage in this collection because his songs are translated from the Yiddish. This almost always produces stiff and unnatural prosody. The *Hunger March,* for example, deserves a better translation, for it is a straight-forward and effective mass song that shows Schaeffer at his best, which is when he is simplest.

Of the fourteen songs in this volume only four are, strictly speaking, mass songs. There should be more. The rest are revolutionary choral compositions written for performance by trained workers' choruses and solo songs intended for concert performance. (Of the latter group, *God to the Hungry Child* by Janet Barnes is immature and might well have been omitted.) These various categories obviously do not belong together, and in later editions, when there are more songs of each type, it would be wise to issue them in separate collections. Also, one would like to see a larger number of composers represented in the collection.

Those of us who wish to see music play its part in the workers' struggle for a new world order, owe a vote of thanks to the Composers' Collective for making an auspicious start in the right direction.

Eisenstein to Goebbels

An Open Letter on Fascism and German Film Art

HERR DOCTOR:

IT WILL doubtless not distress, and possibly not even surprise you to learn that I am not a subscriber to the German Press now so neatly uniformalized under your aegis.

Usually I don't even read it.

This is why you should be surprised that I happen, though rather belatedly, to have learned of the latest of your appearances before the assembled film makers of Germany at the Kroll Opera House in Berlin on February the 10th.

On this appearance you once more honored with laudatory mention my film, *The Battleship Potemkin.*

More, for a second time, just as a year ago, you were good enough to hold it up as a pattern of quality that National-Socialist films should emulate.

That you should send your film-people to study your enemies shows wisdom.

But in doing so you commit just one tiny little methodological error.

Allow me to point it out.

And please don't be cross if you don't like it when you see it.

We didn't set ourselves up to teach you—you asked for it yourself.

Man is born to error.

And deeply erroneous is your hypothesis that in some manner it may be possible for Fascism to give rise to a great Germanic art of the films.

Even with the utmost benevolent assistance of an Aryan Holy Ghost such as you have cast your good self to be.

"The proof of the pudding is in the eating."

A sad deal of time is already sped, and your much lauded National Socialism has not yet produced in any of the arts anything even in the least digestible.

Accordingly, it looks as though you may have to appear quite frequently with speeches along the lines of the one you have already delivered.

A stale and ungrateful occupation. Acting as inspiration to a cinema that had no few achievements in the past, but is now paralyzed by the thumb-screws of Fascism.

I firmly and most profoundly believe that the German working-class will before long help you to rid yourself of this tiresome and unprofitable task.

But in case you should have time for another of these speeches, it is surely unthinkable that so illustrious a bigwig as yourself should be permitted to indulge once again in such flagrant methodological mistakes.

Encouraged by thunderous applause, you drew a handsome sketch of the creative program of the German cinema:

> . . . *real life must once more be made the basic stuff of films!* . . . [1]
>
> With courage and daring, unafraid of difficulty or failure, we must tackle the life of reality. The more failures, the more savagely we must attack these problems. Where would we be now if we had lost courage at each failure? (Loud applause.) Now that rubbishy entertainment is being eliminated from social life, you, creators of the art of the cinema, are faced with the task of approaching and tackling the theme of the immortal German People. Tackling that People whom none knows better than we. . . . Every People is what is made out of it. (Bravo!) And what can be made of the German People has already been sufficiently demonstrated. (Stormy applause).
>
> The Public does not reject art.
>
> AND I AM CONVINCED THAT IF WE DID PUT ON HERE IN ONE OF OUR CINEMA PALACES A FILM THAT DID ACTUALLY EMBRACE OUR ERA, THAT WAS ACTUALLY A REAL NATIONAL-SOCIALIST *BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN,* THE HOUSE WOULD BE SOLD OUT AND FOR A RECORD RUN!

1 Italics in German press report.

When you say "Battleship" I presume you have in mind not only my *Potemkin,* but in fact the whole victorious squadron of our films of the last few years.

And in sooth, what a brilliant, what a dazzlingly brilliant program.

We all know that only true life, the truth of life and its true presentation do and can serve as a basis for true art.

And what a masterpiece could be a truthful film of Germany today.

However, for realization of your brilliant program you certainly need counsel.

For in our days great art, the true picturization of life, the truth of life, even life itself is possible only in a land of Soviets, whatever that land's name may have been in the past.

Whereas truth and National-Socialism are a contradiction in terms.

He who follows truth cannot follow the path of National-Socialism.

He who is for truth, is against you!

How dare you speak of life at all, you who with axe and machine-gun are bringing death and exile to everything live and worth-while in your country?

Slaughtering the best sons of the German working-class and scattering like ashes throughout the world those who are the pride of German science and the culture of the world?

How dare you call upon your film organization to portray life truthfully without demanding of it first of all to portray to the world the thousands languishing and maltreated in the catacombs of your prisons, the torture chambers of your fortresses?

How can you contrive the impudence even to mention truth after the Babel Tower of muddle, impudence and lies that you built up at Leipzig? And at a moment when you are feverishly constructing just such another edifice of falsehood against Thaelmann?

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In the voice of the good shepherd, you thus pursue your oration:

> . . . if only I receive the conviction that behind any film there lies honest, artistic endeavor, I shall foster and defend it by every means. . . . (Same speech).

You are lying, Mr. Goebbels.

You know only too well that an honest and artistic film could only be one which would expose to its full depth the hell in which Germany has been plunged by National-Socialism.

You would hardly encourage *such a film!*

Real German film art is that which would call upon the revolutionary masses of Germany to fight you.

For that, real courage and daring are certainly necessary.

Because despite all the sweet tunes of your speeches, you keep your art and culture in the same iron fetters as the thousands of your prisoners in the hundreds of your concentration camps.

And works of art are not born as you imagine them.

We, for example, know and some of our work has proved besides, that works that deserve that title do, have done, and will do so only by virtue of the fact that, through the medium of the creative artist, is expressed the clearly formulated, determined striving of the class.

Real and true work is the formalized striving of the class to consolidate its struggle, its achievements, its social pattern in the indestructible images of art.

And the better the work of art, the better has the artist succeeded in understanding, in feeling and in transmuting this creative striving of the masses themselves.

You do not view thus class and the masses.

As you say: " . . . Every People is what is made out of it . . . " And there can be found idiots who applaud you at this point of your speech.

Just wait a little. The working-class will make its own correction of this, if one may call it such, conception, Mr. Demiurge of Divine Power.

Then you will learn who is the real force of history.

You will learn then who makes whom, and what will be done with you and . . . out of you.

War, it is said, gives birth to heroes.

Mountains, it is said, give birth to mice.

But no Goebbels, aspiring to give birth to a New Germany, like Athena, from his head, is capable of giving birth to a great National-Socialist cinema!

Strain as you may, you cannot create a National-Socialist realism!

For in that lying mongrel there would be as much real truth and realism as there is in National-Socialist . . . Socialism.

Which quantity has been exactly estimated by Comrade Stalin in his report to the Eighteenth Party Congress.

Not an atom!

> . . . I refer not to Fascism in general, but here primarily to Fascism of the German type, incorrectly designated National-Socialism, for despite the most scrupulous investigation it is impossible to descry in it even an atom of socialism. . . . (From Comrade Stalin's report, *Pravda*, 28.1.34.)

Only a true socialist order such as that of the Soviet Union is capable of giving birth to a great realistic art in the future and in the present.

Of it you can only dream.

Even to guess, you find difficult. Always wrong, and wrong end foremost. You are fortune-telling with the wrong pack. However, you sharp, you can't help yourself.

Go on painting the Prussian blue of your lyrical projects. But learn and know that only a true socialism and a program of socialist attack guarantee a creative program in all the arts.

The wireless of the Arctic heroes of the *Tchelyaskin* informs you that, locked in and marooned upon the ice, they derive new strength and an access of creative energy listening to the report to the Seventeenth Congress of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

Locked in your fetters for long weary months, your victims and our heroes Dimitroff, Taneff and Popoff were deprived of all connection with the outside world. At some happy instant for a few days the isolation was broken. A newspaper penetrated to them. On its pages this same report. This moment, these printed columns, sufficed to compensate for all these months of suffering. From Taneff's own lips, a day after his return, I heard what they meant for your prisoners. They were a tide of new energy and new heart for the pitiless fight.

In these columns is everything that every "soldier of the revolution" (to use the Soviet citizen Dimitroff's phrase) must have known a year ago and continue to know for many a year to come.

In those columns is everything on which to base the creative program of a "soldier of the art revolution" in any branch of arms—literature, art, cinema—in its share of the last fight for a classless society.

It is the perfect example of socialist realism in action.

It is also the perfect pattern of socialist realism for all the sectors of artistic creation.

It is not—the empty symbols of your speeches.

After pledging your high patronage to "honest, artistic endeavor" in any film you benevolently add:

> . . . but I do not insist that a film should begin and end with a National-Socialist procession. Leave the National-Socialist processions to us—we know how to do them better than you. . . .

Well said! Most truly said!!

Get back to your drums, Master Drummer-in-Chief!

Stop disporting yourself with ritual pipings on the magic flute of National-Socialist realism in the cinema.

Stop imitating your idol Frederick the Great and on his own flute, too.

Just stay at your more congenial instrument —the axe.

Don't waste your time to no purpose.

It's not much longer that you'll be able to wield that axe.

So go it while the going's good!

Burn books.

Burn the Reichstag.

But don't imagine that a parade-ground art reared on all this filth will ever be able to "burn with its voice the hearts of men."

Moscow. S. M. EISENSTEIN.

Between Ourselves

THE pressure of events has turned this week's issue into more or less of a strike special. A good deal of material has been crowded out by the necessity of covering the immense struggle of the workers throughout the country. This applies to art work as well as text.

A. B. Magil, who writes from Toledo, is a member of the international advisory board of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers.

Sender Garlin, of the staff of the Daily Worker, had just finished a lecture tour for THE NEW MASSES, in Milwaukee, when the Minneapolis situation developed, and went on there to report it.

Iris Hamilton, who writes from San Francisco, is active in the labor movement on the Pacific Coast.

Edwin Seaver, author of *The Company,* lives in Cambridge, Mass., and is engaged on a second novel.

Margaret Wright Mather was one of those clubbed by the police in the C.W.A. workers' demonstration in New York.

Alan Calmer is at work on a book dealing with the tradition of revolutionary literature in America.

We have a group of sketches by Ben Field, *Four Wobblies,* which we had intended to publish this week. They will appear shortly.

Other articles for forthcoming issues include *Subsistence Villages in the South,* by Louise Preece; a Marxist examination of the system of philosophy of Dr. Morris R. Cohen, written by Paul Salter; and Ilya Ehrenbourg's article on *The Civil War in Austria.*

The second quarterly issue of THE NEW MASSES is scheduled for July 3; it will be on sale on newsstands June 29.

The Workers' Book Shop, 50 East 13th Street, wishes us to call attention to its circulating library. The works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, etc., as well as books on war, Fascism and the Soviet Union can be read for a minimum fee of 15 cents a week. As soon as a book comes off the press it is put into the circulating library. The latest working class novels are included. The Workers' Book Shop will forward the rules governing the circulating library on request, and invites telephone inquiries (ALgonquin 4-6953).

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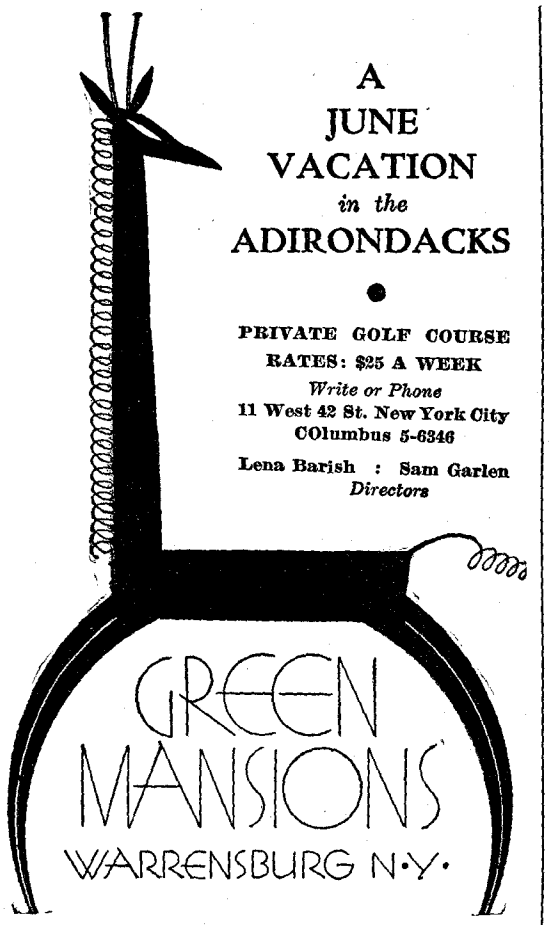

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